

**Redefining Time:
An Analysis of the Time-Eternity Relationship in the Theology
of Hugh Ross Mackintosh, Emil Brunner, & Jürgen Moltmann**

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Declaration of Authorship:

In conjunction with regulations 3.8.7a-c of the University of Edinburgh Postgraduate handbook, I declare that I have composed this thesis entirely on my own and that no part of it has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The twentieth century has been called the "century of eschatology" because this doctrine expanded to include many elements of theology that had previously been neglected as germane to "the end times." As a result of movements which began in the nineteenth century, all of contemporary theology has been "eschatologized" to the point where eschatology has become the instrumental hermeneutic through which all other theological motifs are interpreted. In particular, there has been a resurgence of philosophical, theological, and scientific inquiry into the concept of time and its ontological status in determining the nature of reality. This resurgence has led to significant implications for the definition of God's eternity.

In this dissertation I examine the relationship between time and eternity in twentieth century Reformed eschatology by analyzing the work of three Reformed theologians who benefit from and inform their respective generations' understanding of eschatology. In the work of H. R. Mackintosh, Emil Brunner, and Jurgen Moltmann, one finds a redefinition of time as it relates to God's eternity. Each theologian strategically deals with the dominant legacies of Idealism and Materialism from the nineteenth century in defending the centrality of eschatological hope for Christian faith.

Through their work, one understands why a contemporary eschatological interpretation of time departs from the traditional Boethian view of eternity as sheer timelessness in favor of a more comprehensive view of eternity as part of God's own being which God shares with creation. Thus, the theology of time has become a hotly-debated topic within eschatological discussions, focusing on the nature of God's eternity and the human experience of time.

The debate over time and eternity also has repercussions for christology as all of Jesus' life is re-interpreted as an eschatological event which reveals God's will for the world. The Christ event is an act of eschatological revelation, and therefore doctrines which deal with the person and work of Christ are re-examined through the lens of the time-eternity relation. We see that twentieth century eschatology reshaped the understanding of time and eternity in that eternity is now understood to be a description of God's being which incorporates time. Eternity is descriptive of the quality of God's life rather than God's timelessness. For human beings, temporal life is marked by transience, change, and death, while eternal life characterizes living in the fullness of God's presence. As a result of faith, eternal life has begun now for human beings in a provisional way. We have also seen how the resurrection of Jesus was an eschatological event that ushered in the new eschatological eon for creation. The process of creation's transition from temporality to eternity began at the resurrection and will be completed at the consummation. Thus, Reformed eschatology now unites all of created reality, including space and time, to the person and work of Christ as he brings in the eschatological kingdom of God.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One	Redefining Time	1
	Project Goal	1
	Reality as “Tensed”	11
	Placing Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann within the Reformed Tradition	23
Chapter Two	Redefining Time: The Present	64
	The Eternity of God	65
	The Human Experience of Time	89
	Crucifixion, Suffering, and Eschatology	102
Chapter Three	Redefining Time: The Past	120
	The Creation of Time	121
	The Lord of History	128
	Incarnation, Time, and Eschatology	144
Chapter Four	Redefining Time: The Future	176
	The Problem of “The End” and the Parousia of Christ	177
	Eschatological Judgment	197
	Resurrection, Time, and the New Age	219
Conclusion	Redefined Time	247
Bibliography		266

Chapter One

Redefining Time: Project Goal

God is eternal. This statement seems to be, on the surface, a simple declaration regarding one of God's attributes. It is one of the basic confessions of faith, drawn from the biblical witness of a God who is transcendent over all temporal creation. Jewish and Christian scriptures contain numerous ascriptions to a God who is above and beyond the parameters of time. Among them, Psalm 90 proclaims God's transcendence in that "before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." Likewise, Isaiah 40 expresses faith in a God who surveys the passage of time from an eternal vantage point: "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom." Hebrews 13 extols the endless continuity in Jesus Christ who "is the same yesterday and today and forever." Jesus himself incurs the wrath of many when he asserts in John 8 that "before Abraham was, I am."¹ Faith in God is always accompanied by a belief that the eternal God is transcendent above history and not subject to the passage of time in the same way that creatures are.

Classical doctrinal statements regarding God link eternity with other attributes in order to describe God's absolute and unlimited life. Within the Reformed Tradition, when the Westminster Confession of Faith articulates its doctrine of God, it does so by assigning superlative characteristics to the God who is the opposite of humanity, so that God is "infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible,

¹ Other important passages regarding God's transcendence over time include Genesis 1:1; Proverbs 8:22-30; Isaiah 43:10; Isaiah 57:15; Malachi 3:6; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:17; James 1:17; 1 Peter 1:20; and 2 Peter 3:8.

almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute.”² Such statements of God’s transcendent being are echoed throughout history as the church links God’s eternity to an infinite existence void of any change.

Scratching just below the surface of this seemingly simple belief in God’s eternity, however, reveals many complexities in modern theology concerning what it means to ascribe the concept of eternity to God, mainly how eternity and time are related. In his eternity is God completely void of time and therefore *timeless*, or is eternity an endless duration of time and therefore temporal? To claim that God is “everlasting” and without beginning or end does not answer the question, and proponents of both divine temporality and divine timelessness mount impressive arguments based on many of the same scriptural references.³ Indeed, the task of defining of God’s relationship to time is obscured by the abundance of biblical passages that, taken together, lack a unified definition of either time or eternity.⁴ Consequently, James Barr has noted that “if such a thing as a Christian doctrine of time has to be developed, the work of discussing it and developing it must belong not to biblical but to philosophical theology.”⁵ To be sure, inquiring into the meaning of the eternal God’s relation to temporality raises numerous philosophical and theological questions.

If God’s being eternal means that God is completely timeless, then are all measurements of time irrelevant when applied to God? What is the composition and meaning of history, the “progress” of time, if God is timeless? Are all moments in time simultaneously present to God, and if they are, then is not *every* moment predetermined by God without any possible alternatives? Does being eternal

² “The Westminster Confession of Faith,” in *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church: Part I, Book of Confessions* (Louisville, KY: Office of the General Assembly, 1996), 6.011.

³ Alan G. Padgett, *God, Eternity, and the Nature of Time* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992), chp. 2.

⁴ Paul Helm, *Eternal God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 5-11.

⁵ James Barr, *Biblical Words for Time* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 149.

necessarily mean that God is immutable and cannot experience any changes in relation to creatures? Can an immutable and impassable God really be the personal God who sustains creation, who reveals himself to the men and women he loves, and who calls Israel and the church into being? Since God creates and interacts with temporal creatures, which surely God does according to the Bible, then is not God affected by changes in such a way that renders God temporal as well? Saying that God is eternal is no simple utterance, and it quickly raises many implications for theology and faith. The subjects of time and eternity, consequently, have been prominent areas of study in the history of Christian theology, and the last one hundred years in particular have seen a resurgence of theological inquiry into the idea that God is eternal.

In an insightful essay that analyzes the resurgence of eschatology in twentieth century theology, Christoph Schwöbel claims that “when one looks back on the history of theological thought in the twentieth century one cannot avoid the impression that it could correctly be called the century of eschatology.”⁶ Schwöbel makes this claim by carefully tracing several key developments which increased the scope of eschatology for theology, and he helpfully identifies particular areas of eschatological thought where unique contributions were made to strengthen and expand eschatology's significance for theology as a whole. Schwöbel's most significant conclusion is that contemporary theology's renewed appreciation for eschatology has resulted in a highly-nuanced understanding of the relationship between time and eternity. As the subjects of time and eternity have generated more and more intellectual curiosity, modern theologians, philosophers, and scientists have

⁶ Christoph Schwöbel, “Last Things First?: The Century of Eschatology in Retrospect,” *The Future as God's Gift*, ed. David Fergusson and Marcel Sarot (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 217-241.

engaged in much fruitful dialogue in a quest to better understand the relationship between of time and eternity for a variety of fields.

As a result of this dialogue, what it means in modern theology to say that God is eternal is nothing simplistic at all! To the contrary, it is a statement that is hotly debated from the variety of angles mentioned above, and there is no uniformity of opinion when it comes to describing the nature of God's eternity and how an eternal God relates to a temporal creation. As a result of this theological debate, twentieth century theology, under the rubric of eschatology, reveals several important developments in the ways in which temporality and the human experience of it are enveloped in and confronted by the eternity of God. The evolving understanding of God's eternity is crucial in modern theology because, as Nelson Pike has stated, "the position that a theologian takes on the topic of divine eternity has a kind of controlling effect on the general shape and texture of his broad theological view about the nature of God."⁷ Pannenberg likewise assesses that "the relation between time and eternity is the crucial problem in eschatology, and its solution has implications for all parts of Christian doctrine."⁸ Within modern theology the conundrum of the time/eternity dialectic has far-reaching consequences for so many doctrines that are basic to Christian belief.

⁷ Nelson Pike, *God and Timelessness* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), ix.

⁸ Pannenberg rightly goes on to link the question of time's relation to eternity to many other aspects of doctrine by saying: "The identity of those who will be raised with those who are now alive; the relation of the future of God's kingdom at the end of history to its being present in the work of Jesus; the relation of the general resurrection of the dead at the return of Jesus Christ to the fact that even at death those who sleep in him are already with him, so that their fellowship with him is not broken; the relation of the return of Jesus himself to his earthly work; and last but not least the relation of the eternal kingdom of God and his world government to the futurity of his kingdom – all these are questions and themes that are without answers, and the substance of which cannot be understood, so long as we do not clarify the relation between time and eternity. But the answers we give here affect also our understanding of human creatureliness in distinction from its corruption by sin, and they obviously have ramifications also for our understanding of God's economy of salvation as a whole in its relation to the inner trinitarian life of God." Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, v. 3, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromily (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 595-596.

For example, if one subscribes to a theory of God's absolutely timeless existence, on the one hand, then critical implications arise regarding God's immutability and the determinism of divine decrees. If one asserts, on the other hand, that God's eternity does not mean timelessness but everlasting temporality, then God is capable experiencing duration and change. This view affects one's doctrine of creation and God's immanence within it and sovereignty over it. A person's understanding of God's eternity informs her doctrine of the incarnation of the Son of God in time and how this event affects God's eternal being. Theological definitions of human life, atonement, eternal life, and other doctrinal areas are fed by the position one takes regarding the relationship of eternity to time.

As we shall see, the major impetus of recent theologies of time and eternity is a move away from the traditional theological account of eternity as sheer timelessness. The classical approach, which was the dominating hermeneutic throughout ancient and medieval theology, regards God as absolutely timeless. For the timeless God of orthodoxy, all moments in time are eternally "present" to God and all events exist in a divine timeless simultaneity. This, in turn, leads to inescapable conclusions regarding God's immutability and inability to experience any duration or succession in relation to the temporal process. It is this traditional definition of the timelessness of God that undergoes tremendous critique and refinement within twentieth century eschatology.

Schwöbel's assessment of twentieth century eschatology begins with his belief that the Historical Quest movement initiated by Schweitzer and Weiss began to raise theology's eschatological awareness to an unprecedented level. It was this movement in modern theology that proved to be the wedge that precipitated the opening of the

parameters of eschatology to include time and eternity.⁹ The broadening scope of eschatological boundaries occurred mainly through new approaches to time and eternity in the fields of science, theology, and philosophy, and consequently eschatology came to include much more than the traditional "end-time" topics of death, judgment, heaven, and hell. With a renewed concentration on the concepts of time and eternity, "eschatology could therefore no longer be relegated to a harmless little chapter at the end of dogmatics, as Barth characterized the place of the 'last things' in their ordinary dogmatic treatment, but had to be understood as the perspective which determines the theological enterprise from the start."¹⁰ The growing importance of eschatology for all of theology has resulted in a redefinition of time and eternity within the twentieth century that I will examine through the work of three particular theologians whose work has been highly regarded within academic and ecclesiastical circles.

The goal of this dissertation is to examine the diverging aspects of time in relation to eternity in twentieth century Reformed eschatology, and to accomplish this goal I will focus on the work of three Reformed theologians whose careers form a traceable progression of thought during the last one hundred years. The three Reformed theologians whose work I have chosen to explore are Hugh Ross Mackintosh, Emil Brunner, and Jürgen Moltmann. They are systematic theologians who became increasingly aware of the eschatological implications of theology, and they pay special attention to the New Testament's claims for the eschatological future on account of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Comparing and contrasting their views on time and eternity will yield the dividend of a better understanding of the

⁹ Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, trans. W. Montgomery (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1910); Johannes Weiss, *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God*, trans. Richard H. Hiers (London: SCM Press, 1971).

¹⁰ Schwöbel, "Last Things First?" 222.

significance of eschatology within modern theology. Studying their views on time and eternity will also reveal several aspects of their work that have not yet been described in print.

The choice of Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann is two-fold. The first reason relates to the chronological sequence of their work. Dividing the twentieth century into three fairly even periods coincides closely to their theological careers: Mackintosh worked in the first one-third of the century, Brunner in the second, and Moltmann in the third. Thus, we gain a sense of the progression of eschatological thought by following their combined work over a one hundred year span. Each one is shaped by the dominant theological and philosophical influences of their day as well as the scientific discoveries and cultural events in the larger world. Studying their work within this chronological framework will reveal both the continuity and change in theology regarding time and eternity as one period gave way to the next.

H. R. Mackintosh represents an early renewal of inquiry into eschatological perspectives, and even though his eschatological views are not as well-known or as well-developed as later theologians, Mackintosh serves as an important early figure in the resurgence of this doctrine. Mackintosh's position in the early part of the century displays his dependence upon and subsequent break from the legacy of liberalism that pervades late nineteenth and early twentieth century thought. In his work he strategically steers a theological course between the idealism and materialism that dominates the philosophical and theological endeavors of the early twentieth century.

Emil Brunner was a tremendously influential theologian who contributed greatly to the doctrine of eschatology during the middle years of the twentieth century, and Brunner, who is widely described as a theologian within the “neo-orthodox” movement, represents a generation of dialectical theologians whose work

incorporates a thoroughly eschatological outlook.¹¹ I recognize that there is a problem of speaking in these terms in that “neo-orthodoxy” too often serves as a generalization of the work of several mid-twentieth century theologians. The work of Barth, Brunner, Neibuhr, and Tillich, among others, cannot be simplistically labeled as neo-orthodox as if their work neatly merges together within one school of thought.¹² Nevertheless, Brunner served as a major influence on theologians and pastors alike during the middle years of the twentieth century, and it was through his writings that many in the United States and Europe were introduced to those mentioned above.¹³

In addition to Mackintosh and Brunner, I will also assess the tremendous developments in eschatological thought regarding time and eternity that are proposed by Jürgen Moltmann during the final one-third of the century. As a late-twentieth century theologian, Moltmann displays an acutely sensitive approach to the radical nature of evil that only a theologian working in a post-Holocaust context could produce. He is intensely aware of the ways in which evil thwarts God's intentions,

¹¹ For definitions of neo-orthodoxy, see James Richmond, “Neo-Orthodoxy,” in *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. John Bowden and Alan Richardson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 395; Langdon Gilkey, “Neo-orthodoxy,” in *A Handbook of Christian Theology*, ed. Arthur A. Cohen and Marvin Halverson (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1958), 256-261.

¹² Bruce McCormack has carefully delineated several reasons why the neo-orthodox descriptor is unsuitable for Barth’s work in comparison to Brunner and others. See Bruce L. McCormack, *Karl Barth’s Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909-1936* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 1-28.

¹³ See Gary Dorrien, *Theology Without Weapons: The Barthian Revolt in Modern Theology* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2000), 6-13. Since Brunner’s theology is often associated, in both comparison and contrast, with that of Karl Barth, a fair question to ask in this discussion is why one might choose Brunner over Barth as a mid-century theologian to investigate. Certainly, Barth incorporates into his theology the eschatological elements of Christian doctrine in very significant ways. I have chosen Brunner over Barth, however, for the primary reason of bringing to light an aspect of Brunner’s theology that has not yet received the attention of scholarship. Unlike Barth, Brunner’s eschatological views, in particular those of time and eternity, have not received nearly the same amount of research and attention as Barth’s have. Brunner is often overlooked as an example of a mid-twentieth century dialectical theologian who fully embraces eschatology in an attempt to reclaim it at the center of systematic theology. Some work of research must be done to shed light on Brunner’s approach to time and eternity, whereas Barth has been and continues to be extensively probed in regard to his eschatology. Analyses of Barth’s theology of time and eternity include Colin Gunton, *Becoming and Being: The Doctrine of God in Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 177-185; Richard H. Roberts, “Barth’s Doctrine of Time,” in *Karl Barth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 88-146.

and he strives to demonstrate how eschatological hope is the only means by which humanity may look forward to the future in the midst of contemporary injustice and suffering. Moltmann is important also for the ways in which he represents a generation that is concerned with the enormous ecological problems that face the world, and he incorporates into his eschatology a dimension which addresses the future of creation as well as humanity. Moltmann offers several unique propositions regarding time, eternity, and the eschatological future for a creation that is plagued by social and ecological disasters.

The second reason behind my choice of these three for analysis is that their work reveals the major theological and philosophical shift that took place within eschatology during the twentieth century. As a direct result of their views on time and eternity, their theology reveals a trend of moving away from the emphasis on God's eternity as timelessness that we find in traditional theology toward a view of God's eternity as inclusive of time. God's eternity incorporates temporality and makes it possible. God's dynamic eternity will allow for the prospect that certain attributes of God are immutable, while God also experiences types of change and duration in relation to creation, and in particular, to human beings. Each theologian shares a desire to incorporate temporal history within a larger eschatological framework of God's purposes, and their efforts share common themes, as well as definite differences, in their propositions of how the eternal God interacts with creation.

The narrative format that I have chosen for this work is best described as a *tensed* approach: through the genres of the past, present, and future tenses of time. This approach in itself reveals my own belief that reality is the dynamic process of God's continual engagement with creation and with humanity. Using the tenses of

time are an absolute necessity if we are to speak of God in meaningful way, a way which is much different to an approach based on a static theory of time, which I shall define in due course. Twentieth century theology's move to pull eschatology out of the future "end times" and into present reality greatly alters how we define the experiences of the past, present, and future. This move affects how we view the human experience of time as temporal beings who are invited to share, in part, in the eternity of God. Therefore, each chapter focuses on how the distinct tenses of time – past, present, and future – come into play in the descriptions of eschatological doctrines by Mackintosh, Moltmann, and Brunner. I will analyze what theories of time and eternity each theologian pre-supposes in order to propose the positions they hold regarding different aspects of Christian doctrine. In particular, we shall see how Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann describe the time-eternity relation in the christological doctrines of the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection and how these are defined as eschatological events.

A cautionary word must be said about the nature of this project regarding the possibilities of examining each of these theologians. Any one of them alone could serve as the topic of an in-depth examination regarding time and eternity. Given the voluminous writings of Brunner and Moltmann, especially, each supplies enough material for analysis to occupy one's attention until the end times. The purpose of this project is not to probe the innumerable theological intricacies of each theologian. The goal is to understand the nuances of time and eternity in Reformed eschatology through their views and to offer, by comparison and contrast of their work, insights into the evolving definitions of time and eternity during the twentieth century.

Reality as “Tensed”

Before we assess our three theologians’ views of time in relation to eternity, we should outline some working assumptions regarding time and how we experience it. At the beginning of the twentieth century, J. M. E. McTaggart analyzed the two basic ways in which events in time can be described, and he provided theologians and philosophers alike with the terminology necessary to describe temporal reality.¹⁴ While his views have been altered and expounded upon, his division of time into the A-series and B-series has proven to be instrumental in defining the relation of temporal events and the nature of time. McTaggart’s two theories of time have other names which are generally used interchangeably by philosophical and theological theorists of time. The A-series is known also as *tensed* or *dynamic*, while the B-series is frequently associated with the terms *tenseless* or *static*.¹⁵ I prefer to employ the terms tensed/dynamic and tenseless/static because they are more descriptive of the ontological nature of events than are the monikers A-series and B-series.

According to the tensed theory of time, events are ordered by the temporal predicates of past, present, or future, and time is described as dynamic because there is real change and becoming in the passage of time. Events that are future eventually are experienced as present and then past and are ontologically described as such.¹⁶

¹⁴ J. M. E. McTaggart, “The Unreality of Time,” in *Mind* 17 (1908), 457-474; republished in McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence*, v. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), chp. 33.

¹⁵ William Lane Craig helpfully delineates the several different “families” of theories that are subsumed under both the A-series and B-series theories of time, but for our purposes it is relevant to note only the primary aspects of both theories and that he uses the various terms interchangeably. See his extensive analysis of both theories in Craig, *The Tensed Theory of Time* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 2000), and Craig, *The Tenseless Theory of Time* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 2000).

¹⁶ The reliance on linguistic theory to describe the ontological nature of time has been carefully outlined by several modern philosophers. Gorman and Wessman have observed that “all four thousand or so known languages enable their speakers to designate temporal relationships and to distinguish between past, present, and future events – though with varying degrees of difficulty.” Bernard S. Gorman and Alden E. Wessman, “The Emergence of Human Awareness and Concepts of Time,” in *The Personal Experience of Time*, ed. Bernard S. Gorman and Alden E. Wessman (New York: Plenum

A tensed theory of time accounts for temporal succession and the claim that what is present is what is real.¹⁷ Events in the present are real, events in the future are not yet real, and events in the past were real but are no longer. The present is given primacy over the past and the future because what is present is real and, therefore, true. This means that change is necessarily the determining factor in the tensed description of events as there can be no time without change. This type of change, however, is extrinsic rather than intrinsic. An extrinsic change involves change in an object's relation to another object, while an intrinsic change is a non-relational change involving only the subject.¹⁸ Extrinsic changes are the signifiers that time has elapsed.¹⁹ Due to changes that occur over time, there is an ontological distinction between the tenses of events that must be past, present, or future, and this distinction is measured by the changing status of a thing or event.

Defining dynamic time, therefore, is a matter of tense in that tense ultimately reveals the basic truth of a real event: it was, is, or will be. Because events come into existence and then cease to exist, tensed descriptions change truth-values as there is a real difference between an event that exists in the present and an event which is either past or future and therefore does not exist. Because future events do not exist now they do not exist at all and there are conceivably innumerable future events that can emerge out of the present.²⁰ Potential future events are not actually real while they

Press, 1977), 44-45; See also Richard Gale, *The Language of Time* (New York: Humanities Press, 1968); Quentin Smith, *Language and Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and D. H. Mellor, *Real Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

¹⁷ A. N. Prior, "The Notion of the Present," in *Studia Generale* 23 (1970): 245-248; David Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 203-204.

¹⁸ An example of an object's intrinsic change would be an apple's change from green to red. The apple has not changed in relation to anything but itself. A parent, however, will extrinsically change in height in relation to a child who grows taller. The change is not due to any change in height of the parent but to the intrinsic change of the height of the child. In relation to each other, they change extrinsically. See Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 211-215;

¹⁹ William Carter and Scott Hestevold, "On Passage and Persistence," in *American Philosophical Quarterly* 31 (1994), 269-283.

²⁰ Storrs McCall, "Objective Time Flow," in *Philosophy of Science* 43 (1976), 337-362.

still exist in the future, but if one of the possible future events become present, i.e. real, then there is a change in the ontological status of the event where it possesses a truth-value that it lacked while only in the future. For this reason, a tensed theory of time sees time's passage from the future into the present to be a fundamental element of objective reality – the becoming actual of non-actual future events.²¹

The B-series, tenseless theory of time differs from the tensed approach in that it disallows change and temporal becoming: events are permanently fixed according to their position in relation to other events. The temporal relation between events is not described in terms of past, present, or future but as prior to, simultaneous with, or later than. There are not multiple possible events that could emerge from the future because all events already exist in relation to each other. When events are viewed as fixed in time, then time is actually *static*, and there is no becoming of events because they already exist in relation to each other. There is no such thing as change because all temporal events exist independently of an observer who may describe one event as “present” depending on his location in the time-series.

The notion of change is, therefore, mind-dependent upon the one who observes an event as either before or after another event. In a tenseless reality, though, all events exist equally in time and are therefore real.²² They exist tenselessly because there is no basic ontological distinction between events. The tensed terms of past, present, and future are descriptions that matter only for a human observer.²³ In a tenseless reality, events all exist objectively and concurrently at locations in time, and

²¹ Brian Leftow, *Time and Eternity* (Cornell, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 17-18.

²² On the mind-dependency of tense, Adolf Grünbaum writes: “Coming *into* being (or becoming) is not a property of physical events themselves but only of human or conscious awareness of these events.” Grünbaum, “The Anisotropy of Time,” in *The Nature of Time*, ed. by T. Gold (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 153.

²³ Albert Einstein, who had much to say about time, adopted this static view of time, and therefore he could write to his lifelong friend Michael Besso's survivors upon Besso's death that “this signifies nothing. For us believing physicists the distinction between past, present, and future is only an illusion, even if a stubborn one.” Letter of Albert Einstein, March 21, 1955, quoted in Banesh Hoffman with Helen Dukas, *Albert Einstein: Creator and Rebel* (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1972) 258.

what is “now” depends solely on the position of the subjective witness of an event. Since future events are already real, there is no ontological change in status due to their becoming present. Consequently, the passage of time is not an objective feature of reality: it is only a matter of human perception. Time is therefore static if reality is tenseless, and time does not flow outside the human experience of change and transience.

Adherents to a tenseless view of time tend to speak of reality as a “Block Universe” because time occupies a fourth dimension of space.²⁴ The universe exists in a framework of total simultaneity, where all events exist in a static singularity while only perceived by observers as past, present, and future. Based on Einstein’s descriptions of time’s relativity, reality is conceived as the totality of all moments existing in a static universe, as John Lucas describes:

Relativity regards time as a dimension, like, although not entirely like, the dimensions of space. It encourages us to treat space-time geometrically, and in general relativity to fuse geometry and physics in a single geometrodynamics. It is an inevitable concomitant of this approach that we take a block view of the universe in which the future course of events is already laid out as a path...The future already exists: it is only that we do not yet know what is in store for us, and only discover that as we crawl along our world-line. More cogently, it argues that there cannot be a real, modal or ontological, difference between future and past, because the present – the instant that divides past from future – depends on our criterion of simultaneity, and our criterion of simultaneity depends on our frame of reference.²⁵

²⁴ An idea first proposed by Hermann Minkowski in 1908 in response to Einstein’s work on the Special Theory of Relativity. Minkowski, “Space and Time,” in *The Principles of Relativity*, by A. Einstein, et al., trans. W. Perrett and G. B. Jeffery (New York: Dover Publications, 1952.) See also Hilary Putnam, “Time and Physical Geometry,” in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 64 (April 1967), 240-247; Donald C. Williams, *Principles of Empirical Realism* (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1966); Roger Penrose, “Big Bangs, Black Holes, and ‘Time’s Arrow,’” in *The Nature of Time*, ed. by Raymond Flood and Michael Lockwood, 37-62.

²⁵ John R. Lucas, “The Open Future,” in *The Nature of Time*, ed. Raymond Flood and Michael Lockwood (New York: Blackwell, 1986), 130.

Regarding temporal events as statically fixed, as in a tenseless, block universe, thus disregards the nature of change and becoming that is crucial to the tensed portrayal of reality.²⁶

The main point of contention between theorists of time is which one – the tensed or tenseless -- should be given priority over the other as a more apt description of reality. Michael Tooley describes the drama of this debate by stating that it is “the most fundamental question in the philosophy of time: whether a static or a dynamic conception of the world is correct.”²⁷ McTaggart argues that the A-series is the more basic way of describing time because B-series statements of reality are reducible to and dependent upon the A-series, but not vice-versa. He gains this insight by claiming that the A-series is necessary to account for change, since there cannot be time without change. McTaggart argues that whatever is a necessary condition for the possibility of change is also a necessary condition for the existence of time, and since the A-series is part of the analysis of change, it is a necessary condition for time. Since change cannot be described adequately in B-series terms, there cannot be a B-series without an A-series.²⁸ Put another way, the dependency of tenseless statements upon tense suggests an ontological preference of tense as more descriptive of reality since tenseless statements can be understood in terms of tensed

²⁶ For views that are antagonistic toward the determinism of a block universe, especially as it relates to the Special Theory of Relativity, see Paul Davies, *God and the New Physics* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1983), 131-132; Storrs McCall, “Temporal Flux,” in *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 3 (October 1966), 271.

²⁷ Michael Tooley, *Time, Tense, and Causation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 13.

²⁸ McTaggart is engaged here in a debate primarily with Russell who disagrees with McTaggart’s analysis of the necessity of change as the ground of time. Contrary to McTaggart, Russell contends that change can be best described in terms of a B-series ordering. His famous example is that of a hot poker that cools down, a fact of intrinsic change which B-series descriptions can best capture: (i) the poker is hot at one time; (ii) it is not hot at a later time. In the B-series these facts never change – they are true at all times. For Russell, the B-series is the basis of A-series statements. Thus, for Russell, change can be analyzed in B-series terms only. For an object to change is for it to be in a certain state at one time and not in a state at a later time. Since A-series statements can be analyzed in terms of B-series statements, the A-series is dependent, both ontologically and in terms of the meaning of the statements, on the B-series. For more detailed analysis of the McTaggart-Russell debate, see Michael Dummett, “The Reality of the Past,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 69 (1968-1969), 239-258.

statements, but not vice-versa.²⁹ McTaggart's analysis can be summarized in this way:

1. B-series relations are temporal relations;
2. There cannot be temporal relations unless there is change;
3. There cannot be change unless time in reality has an A-series ordering;
4. Therefore, there cannot be B-series relations unless time in reality has an A-series ordering.

One would be tempted to conclude from this that McTaggart has answered the question of which theory of time is more reflective of reality.

Unfortunately, McTaggart greatly clouds the issue by concluding that even though the A-series is more ontologically basic to reality, the A-series is inherently contradictory and, consequently, time is unreal. The A-series is unreal based on the proposition that "past, present, and future are incompatible determinations. Every moment must be one or the other, but no event can be more than one. But every moment has them all. If M is past, it has been present and future."³⁰ This conclusion, often termed "McTaggart's paradox," maintains the while tense is basic to describing events, tensed descriptions are ultimately fallacious because one event cannot be in three tenses simultaneously. McTaggart concludes that the division of time into an A-series is incoherent and cannot be used to make accurate statements about temporal reality.³¹

Proponents of a block universe similarly dismiss a tensed view of reality primarily as a result of the Special Theory of Relativity. Adding time to the three dimensions of space creates a mathematically defensible structure of reality in which

²⁹ For example, the B-series statement *P is earlier than Q* may be reduced to the A-series statements that: *P is past and Q is present, or P is present and Q is future, or P is past and Q is future, or P is more past than Q, or P is less future than Q.*

³⁰ J. M. E. McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time," 466.

³¹ For critiques of McTaggart's Paradox, see C. D. Broad, *An Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 2:280-302; E. J. Lowe, "The Indexical Fallacy in McTaggart's Proof of the Unreality of Time," in *Mind* 96 (1987), 62-70; David J. Buller and Thomas R. Foster, "The New Paradox of Temporal Transience," in *Philosophical Quarterly* 43 (1992): 357-366.

all moments in time are fixed to a position in space.³² Einstein concluded that Relativity Theory is “distinctly in favor of the static picture and found in this representation of motion as something existing in time-space a more convenient and more objective picture of reality.”³³ Changes may take place in time, but space-time itself never changes, so that events in space-time are fixed in their location. A tenseless theory of time develops from relativity theory in that the structure of the space-time continuum never changes and does not include change and the becoming of events.

Despite McTaggart’s paradox and arguments for a block universe as proposed in Relativity Theory, defenders of a tensed theory of time assert that change and becoming are essential to the understanding of reality because reality itself is tensed. A dynamic view of time is fundamentally correct because tensed facts are not merely a product of language but are accurately descriptive of an objective reality: tense in language is reflective of tense in the world.³⁴ The present is real in human experience while the past and future were and are not yet real. One argument in favor of a tensed reality is offered by the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl. He describes how necessary the categories of past, present, and future are to the human consciousness of time, and this consciousness is reflective of reality itself.³⁵ Likewise, William Friedman says that the “division between past, present, and future so deeply permeates our experience that it is hard to imagine its absence” and that therefore

³² Minkowski, “Space and Time,” in *The Principle of Relativity*, by A. Einstein, et al, trans. W. Perrett and G. B. Jeffry (New York: Dover Publications: 1952), 76.

³³ Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld, *The Evolution of Physics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1938), 220.

³⁴ D. H. Mellor argues for a contrary view that results in tensed sentences being given tenseless truth conditions and that the present is therefore “unreal.” See Mellor, *Real Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 26ff.

³⁵ Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, ed. by M. Heidegger, trans. James Churchill (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1964).

human beings have “an irresistible tendency to believe in the present”³⁶ In their views, human beings are justified in holding a tensed view of reality because the distinctions between past, present, and future are basic to the human experience of time, and this experience is not illusory because time is real. One could argue in response that they are too dependent upon psychological interpretations of the experience of time, which is precisely the claim of adherents to a static view of reality. But to them, the experience of time is more than a psychological interpretation, it is the most basic way in which reality is structured.

Probing arguments in favor of a dynamic conception of the universe have been issued in the last two decades in the work of several philosophers and theologians who propose varying theories which justify a tensed view of reality. They take into account the philosophical and mathematical/scientific implications of maintaining the ontological primacy of a tenseless/static reality, and these theologians offer convincing claims on why a tensed view of reality is correct from a Christian perspective and why we are correct to adhere to a dynamic theory of time.³⁷ Part of William Lane Craig’s defense of a tensed reality is based on his refusal to give in to the claim that tense is only a matter of human observation and is therefore mind-dependent. He follows the rationale of Alvin Plantinga to state that the belief in tense is a “properly basic belief” to human experience that we must hold unless it can be defeated by another belief.³⁸ Craig writes:

³⁶ William Friedman, *About Time* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 92.

³⁷ Since we will be dealing exclusively with the theological and philosophical arguments of our three representative theologians, I believe it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to probe the detailed mathematical and scientific principles involved in the various approaches to both the dynamic and static views of temporality. For the scientific/mathematical computations, including aspect of relativity theory, involved in explaining dynamic and static time, see Craig’s *The Tensed Theory of Time* and *The Tenseless Theory of Time*; Padgett, *God, Eternity, and the Nature of Time, and Eternity*, 82-95; and Michael D. Robinson, *Eternity and Freedom: A Critical Analysis of Divine Timelessness as a Solution to the Foreknowledge/Free Will Debate* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995), 89-109.

³⁸ See Alvin Plantinga, “Reason and Belief in God,” in *Faith and Rationality*, ed. by Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 47-63.

Our belief in the reality of the external world is so deeply ingrained and strongly held than any successful defeater of this belief would have to possess enormous warrant. In the absence of any successful defeater, you are perfectly justified in taking your experience of the external world to be veridical. Now the advocate of a dynamic view of time may argue similarly concerning our belief in the past, present, and future. Belief in the objective reality of tense is a properly basic belief which is universal among mankind. It therefore follows that anyone who denies this belief (and who is not aware that he has no good defeaters of that belief) is irrational, for such a person fails to hold to a belief which is for him properly basic.³⁹

Tense is a fundamental belief based on one's real experience of past, present, and future, and therefore it is incoherent to suggest an alternative theory of tenseless reality if it is never experienced by anyone. In the common experience of time by humanity, present experiences are present before they are past and after they are future.⁴⁰ To deny this claim is to make a statement that contradicts everyone's experience. Since tense is essential to the expression of reality, it is justifiable to claim that reality is itself tensed.

Craig further defends the tensed theory of time by highlighting the experience of the present in contrast to the past and the future, about which we have different attitudes. We must employ the language of tense to speak about what we either remember or anticipate. Attitudes of regret or appreciation for the past and attitudes of dread or excitement for the future must be connected to tensed facts. One cannot describe attitudes toward the past or future without using tense, and such feelings would be irrational in a tenseless reality. Relief and excitement only make rational sense in dynamic time because they are grounded in the reality of temporal

³⁹ William Lane Craig, *Time and Eternity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 132. After examining various views that oppose his, Craig also writes: "On a static theory of time we are all of us hopelessly mired in irrationality, prisoners to an illusion from which we are powerless to free ourselves. By contrast, if a dynamic theory of time is correct, our experiences and beliefs are entirely rational and appropriate. Thus, insofar as we think that such experiences are justified, we should embrace a dynamic theory of time." Craig, *Time and Eternity*, 142.

⁴⁰ This contrasts with what D. H. Mellor, a defender of tenseless reality, says regarding the illusory nature of present experiences. He goes so far as to claim that "although we observe our experiences to be present, it really isn't." See Mellor's rationale in, *Real Time*, 26-54.

becoming.⁴¹ The experience of temporal becoming is likewise basic to the human experience of time because we experience the world in continual flux and movement. If the static view of time, in which there is no objective present, were true, then there would be no way of logically anticipating the future and waiting for it to become present. Craig explains:

When we wait for something to happen, we are experiencing the lapse of time in anticipation of some event. We do not merely experience the tenseless length of the temporal interval between our location and the location of the later event....Rather there must be the experience of the passage of time. In the experience of waiting we apprehend temporal becoming, as things come to be and pass away until the anticipated event occurs. If the static view of time were correct, it would be irrational to wait for anything, since there is no temporal becoming. But such an experience is unavoidable.⁴²

The human experience of temporal becoming is so strong that it is counter-intuitive to propose a view of reality that does not acknowledge the passage of time as a real experience in our anticipation of any date in the future. Thus, by remembering the past and by anticipating the future, we give credence to our fundamental belief that reality itself is tensed.

Alan Padgett undertakes a critique of the static view of time in *God, Eternity, and the Nature of Time*, and he similarly concludes that the arguments behind the static view of time are not convincing enough to negate the claim that reality is dynamic. Padgett does not discredit the arguments which defend the static time of a block universe, but in order to give it precedence there must be reasons for “adopting a stasis view of time as the only proper view of the physical universe as it is in itself.”⁴³ Padgett asserts that defenders of static time in a block universe make the basic mistake of “assuming the *sufficiency of the Special Theory of Relativity for*

⁴¹ Craig, *Time and Eternity*, 137.

⁴² Craig, *Time and Eternity*, 141.

⁴³ Padgett uses the term *stasis* instead of *static* in his work. Padgett, *God, Eternity, and the Nature of Time*, 93.

ontology, in particular for the theory of time.”⁴⁴ He makes this claim after noting that the foundation for Relativity Theory involves certain unsustainable assumptions about the concept of simultaneity in the space-time continuum. In Padgett’s view, there are no overriding philosophical claims which determine that a static view of reality is more fitting than a dynamic.⁴⁵

It is an argument from a theological standpoint that Padgett, Pike, and Swinburne, among others, make that I find the most compelling when considering the question of a tensed versus tenseless reality. We will delve more deeply into many aspects of this argument later, but for introductory purposes, it bears stating that from a Christian perspective reality is tensed because the world is the sphere in which a personal God acts to sustain creation and to redeem human beings in a relational way.⁴⁶ The doctrine that God has created the world and sustains it is central to theism, and this view entails that God is intimately related to what he has made.⁴⁷ The personhood of God determines that reality is dynamic because God loves that to which he is related.

Time is a necessary entity for the relationship between God and the world because this relationship depends on change, development, and growth between God and the “other” with whom he is related. In his argument against a timeless God, Robert Coburn claims that a timeless (Coburn uses the word *eternal* to mean *timeless*) being could not be personal because

surely it is the necessary condition of anything’s being a person that it should be capable (logically) of, among other things, doing at least some of the following: remembering, anticipating, reflecting,

⁴⁴ Padgett, *God, Eternity, and the Nature of Time*, 92.

⁴⁵ Padgett, *God, Eternity, and the Nature of Time*, 96.

⁴⁶ For criteria to establish personhood, see Daniel Dennett, “Conditions for Personhood,” in *The Identities of Persons*, ed. Amelie O. Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 175-196. For aspects of God’s personhood that are central to theism, see Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, 99-125.

⁴⁷ Padgett, *God, Time and Eternity*, 146; Pike, *God and Timelessness*, 110-111; Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, 126-148.

deliberating, deciding, intending, and acting intentionally. To see that this is so, one need only to ask oneself whether anything which necessarily lacked all of the capabilities noted would, under any conceivable circumstances, count as a person. But now an eternal being would necessarily lack all of these capabilities inasmuch as their exercise by a being clearly requires that the being exist in time.⁴⁸

Coburn has been criticized for too quickly assuming that mental events involve duration within God's being, and his critics dismiss his words based primarily on aspects of God's omniscience.⁴⁹

What Coburn's critics fail to elaborate on is his phrase "acting intentionally," and I would add, "being acted upon." Any action of God within creation requires dynamic time because an action results in a change from what was to what is, so that Pike rightly claims that "responses are located in time after that to which they are responses."⁵⁰ It would be impossible to reconcile the God of the Bible who acts, calls, and intervenes with a notion of a static reality. There is real growth and change in people's relationships with God, and there is a mutuality between God and persons who are the recipients of his actions on their behalf.⁵¹ God acts upon and responds to his people in his relationship with them. As we shall see in our section on God's eternity, to act and be acted upon is to be changed in the real relation between the one who acts and the recipient of that action. Therefore, reality is dynamic because God is personal.

⁴⁸ Robert Coburn, "Professor Malcom on God", in *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, v. 40-I, January (1962-3), 155.

⁴⁹ Many have undertaken the argument that a timeless God could, theoretically, be personal, but that is not my concern here. I am not concerned, at this point, with God's temporality or atemporality. I am concerned with whether time is dynamic or static, and I contend that it is dynamic because God is personally related to what he has created. For the personhood of a timeless God, see Craig, *Time and Eternity*, 79-86; Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, 283-309; William E. Mann, "Simplicity and Immutability in God," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 23 (1983), 267-276.

⁵⁰ Pike, *God and Timelessness*, 128.

⁵¹ William Hill, "Does the World Make a Difference to God?," *Thomist* 38 (1974), 146-164.

Placing Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann within the Reformed Tradition

The reinvigorated interest in eschatology and its sub-categories of time and eternity accelerated through the twentieth century's years of upheavals, terrible wars, and remarkable technological and scientific changes. Those who shined the light of scholarship and inquiry onto time and eternity include many luminaries of modern theology. These theologians recovered eschatology from the margins of academic interest and moved it to the center, and their writings remain some of the most in-depth analyses of eschatology in the history of Christian thought. The three theologians serving as the subjects of this study made invaluable contributions to twentieth century theology and the understandings of time and eternity. The fact that these theologians belong to the Reformed Tradition connotes several key factors regarding their approach to theology, and their work reflects the main concerns of the tradition as they have been handed down from the Reformation era. There are many aspects of Reformed theology that guide the work of each theologian. The majesty and praise of God, a polemical view against idolatry, the sovereign freedom of God, and the radical nature of grace are but a few themes that course through the veins of their work. That each of these theologians is Reformed is clear from the prominence of these themes in their work, yet none is confined to their tradition as if in a trap.

There is a dogmatic richness to their theology that seeks to incorporate individual theological premises into a larger, systematic diagram. Each theologian is remarkably well-versed in the history of doctrine and its development through the Patristic and Medieval periods. Their work details the differences in Roman Catholic and Protestant theology as they developed in the centuries following the Reformation, and they are knowledgeable in the discrepancies between Eastern and Western

Christianity. Being well-versed in the development of doctrine informs their views as they are aware that they are heirs in a long line of theologians whose faith and work has preceded theirs. The Reformed tradition is ecumenical by nature, and Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann are willing to engage other vantage points in agreement as well as in dissent in all aspects of their thought. Understanding their particular views on time and eternity will be aided by knowing something of their historical context as well as the major theological and philosophical influences on their work.

Born in 1870, Mackintosh grew up amidst the Calvinism of a Scottish Highlands manse, although his was not a Scottish Calvinism of rigid orthodoxy. After the death of his parents during his childhood, Mackintosh was raised by an uncle who was a minister in the Free Church of Scotland. During his years of theological study, Mackintosh's intellectual perspectives were shaped by the Arts Faculty of Edinburgh University, especially Professor Pringle-Pattison, who impressed upon Mackintosh a deep appreciation for philosophy. Pringle-Pattison instilled in Mackintosh a thirst for philosophical inquiry, particularly in regard to the Hegelianism with which Mackintosh would be engaged throughout his career. The highly influential biblical scholars of his day, Marcus Dods and A. B. Davidson, also strengthened Mackintosh's dedication to the study of Scripture as the Word of God.⁵²

The high point of his theological learning came during his semesters of study in Germany in 1894 and 1895. During these years, he strengthened his command of the German language as well as numerous aspects of German theology. He studied under Ritschl and Herrmann, and he never relinquished admiration for either of these towering intellects. Mackintosh became quite familiar with the Ritschlian school

⁵² Redman, *Reformulating Reformed Theology*, 20.

present in Scotland and on the Continent during the years of his study in Edinburgh and Marburg. Mackintosh carries on a continual dialogue with Ritschl in his work, and Herrmann remained a close friend to Mackintosh from their years of study together.⁵³ Throughout his writings Mackintosh remains indebted to these two thinkers. Often, however, Mackintosh cites Ritschl, not in agreement, but in contrast and criticism. While dependent on Ritschlian thought in many ways, Mackintosh differed from the Ritschlian school in several important areas.⁵⁴

Upon completion of his years of study, Mackintosh assumed the pulpit of Queen Street Free Church in Tayport in 1897, and he remained an influential leader dedicated to the Scottish church for the rest of his life. In 1901 he moved to the Beechgrove congregation in Aberdeen and stayed there until his appointment at the age of thirty-four to the New College faculty in 1904, where he would stay until his death in 1936. He continued to preach regularly in pulpits across Scotland, and he always remained concerned about the theology of preaching and practice of ministry. He was fond of saying "what cannot be preached ought not to be believed," and he continually stressed the close connection between academic theology and the experiences of faith for the Christian. For him, the head and the heart needed to feed off of each other for authentic faith. Mackintosh served in many capacities of leadership in Scottish church life, chairing many committees and serving as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1933. As an ecumenist and church leader, Mackintosh maintained his ties to the German church,

⁵³ Mackintosh's appreciation toward Herrmann is demonstrated in "Herrmann's Communion of God," in *Expository Times* 40 (1928-29): 38-39, a book review in which Mackintosh writes that this book by Herrmann "belongs to that small class of great books on theology...which are also great books of devotion."

⁵⁴ Leitch, *A Theology of Transition*, 27-35

and he expressed grave reservations over what was happening to the church in the early years of the Nazi regime.⁵⁵

Mackintosh maintained his ecumenical links throughout his career as professor at New College, and he is remembered fondly by students and colleagues who learned from his theological enterprise. Thomas F. Torrance writes that the lectures Mackintosh "gave us were often a form of ...'rational worship.' And they were always evangelical and redemptive in their import.....Mackintosh himself was so consumed with the moral passion of the Father revealed in the death of Jesus on the cross, that in his lecture room we often felt we were in a sanctuary, where the holiness and nearness of God were indistinguishable."⁵⁶ Mackintosh corresponded by letter with Barth on at least seventeen occasions, and the two met in person once, leaving Barth with "an unforgettable impression." Largely due to Mackintosh, Barth accepted the invitation to deliver the Gifford Lectures in 1936.⁵⁷

Mackintosh was well-known in his day in both British and Continental theological circles, and his work in the first one-third of the twentieth century has influenced several generations of theologians and pastors alike. Mackintosh is an important figure because his work serves as a transitioning fulcrum between the ebbing liberal theology of the nineteenth century and the rising tide of dialectical theology in the twentieth. Living in the period that he did, Mackintosh is a theologian whose work straddles that of both Ritschl and Barth, for Mackintosh studied under the

⁵⁵ Macaulay writes, perhaps with some hyperbole: "The outbreak of persecution, in the name of Neopaganism, against the Jews and Christian Churches, Protestant and Catholic alike, in Germany filled him with dismay. In the afflictions endured by many German friends, he himself was afflicted. All this vicarious suffering had much to do with the decline of his strength, and with his premature death." Macaulay, "Memoir," 18.

⁵⁶ Thomas F. Torrance, "H. R. Mackintosh: Theologian of the Cross," in *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 5 (1987): 162.

⁵⁷ Mackintosh's letters to Barth, Karl-Barth-Archiv, 25.07.1935; and 29.10.1935

former and read much of the latter.⁵⁸ In the historical development of the doctrine of eschatology, Mackintosh clearly points in the direction that succeeding theologians would move in the later years of the twentieth century.

Mackintosh lived in the closest proximity to the influential work that brought about the rediscovery of the eschatological message of Jesus, and he capitalizes on the new scholarship of this rediscovery in his theological approach. As a result, he realizes that all of theology possesses an eschatological thrust:

In Dogmatics as now taught eschatology comes last, constituting, so to speak, the final movement of the symphony; it is usually the briefest section of the whole and may quite likely stand for something still briefer in the private creed. But in the New Testament it is the atmosphere in which men live and move. Scholarship, as we all know, has discovered this in the last twenty years. Book has followed book, proving more and more in detail how the convictions, the incentives and the consolations of the first Christians believers were -- not purely eschatological but -- eschatological through and through.⁵⁹

With ingenuity and foresight, Mackintosh benefited from the rediscovery of eschatology within late-nineteenth century theology to make it a theme that runs throughout his work. As such, he is heavily reliant on the concepts of time and eternity as he articulates his positions on various doctrines.

Donald Baillie points out in his inaugural lecture for the Hugh Ross Mackintosh Lectureship that Mackintosh was highly prophetic of theology's return to eschatology in the twentieth century, a doctrine which would come to the fore a

⁵⁸ James Leitch's starting premise in his dissertation on Mackintosh is that his theology primed twentieth century European theology for the sea change initiated by Barth. James W. Leitch, *A Theology of Transition: H. R. Mackintosh as an Approach to Karl Barth* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1953). While Barth's career extended well past Mackintosh's death in 1936, Mackintosh read much of Barth's early work and offered an eager, appreciative assessment of Barth: "The theology of Barth, criticize it as we may, is the Christian thinking of a great Christian mind, explosive and often unduly emphatic, but none the less of incalculable import for the church in our time.... At the moment he stands in the midst of his theological work, which cannot but take years to complete. Nothing more enriching for the whole Church could be thought of than that the time for completion should be given him, if God will, and that more and more his living influence should pass from land to land." H. R. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology* (London: Nisbet and Co., 1937), 319.

⁵⁹ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 108.

generation later.⁶⁰ Mackintosh was the first among twentieth century theologians to delve deeply into the understanding that history reveals an origin and a goal which lie outside itself, and that Jesus Christ is the center of that history. Mackintosh devoted several essay-length efforts to delineating the meaning of faith and history for Christian doctrine, and his christology abounds in eschatological themes that would be further developed by later theologians.

While later theologians would be more decisive in their insistence upon eschatology as the framework of interpretation for theology, Mackintosh nevertheless realizes that theology in his day was undergoing tremendous changes, especially the doctrine of eschatology and how it was understood and presented in the field of systematic theology.⁶¹ Mackintosh provides his chief contribution to the doctrine of eschatology in a work entitled *Immortality and the Future*, which was first published in 1915. Mackintosh is well-remembered for his *magnum opus*, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, as well as for his influential work on atonement in *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, and yet it is surprising how little attention is paid to his work on eschatology. It is well worth noting that *Immortality and the Future* was published in close proximity to Mackintosh's main work on christology, and his thoughts on eschatology echo throughout all his writings.

⁶⁰ Donald Baillie, "The Place of H. R. Mackintosh in Modern Theology," Hugh Ross Lectureship, Lecture 1, delivered in New College, Edinburgh, March 8, 1943. According to Baillie, "Mackintosh heralded somewhat proleptically the return to dogma, the return to eschatology, the return to church-consciousness which are now unmistakable. From the start there ran through his thinking a strong sense of 'the divine initiative,' and its priority over human effort, which the dialectical theology has more recently been emphasizing."

⁶¹ "Eschatology is, in short, not devout poetry, covering up hideous doubts and fears, like moss upon a torn and ragged stone; it represents a vital and inalienable impulse of the religious spirit. For, by its very nature, religion takes account of the last and final things. It is concerned with ultimate realities, which have projected themselves into our experience in the form of unconditioned values.... Religion is religion only as it rises into the sphere of finalities, to unite us with the Eternal in modes over which change has no power. Elsewhere we have no choice but to accept the relative; faith alone has, and better still, has promise of, the absolute." H. R. Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915), 107.

Scholars familiar with Mackintosh or with Scottish theological trends have tended to focus on other areas of his work, primarily those of christology and atonement.⁶² Several article-length treatments of Mackintosh appeared within twenty years of his death, including a biographical sketch by his close friend A. B. Macaulay.⁶³ Brief critiques of Mackintosh's christology were offered by scholars who followed him as leaders of Scottish theology. Donald Baillie, a former student and colleague of Mackintosh, touches on Mackintosh's work as he offers a brief analysis of kenotic christology in his book entitled *God Was in Christ*, while John McIntyre also analyzes portions of Mackintosh's kenotic christology in *The Shape of Christology*.⁶⁴

Recent years have seen a renewed interest in Mackintosh's theology, especially in the work of Robert Redman. His excellent book, *Reformulating Reformed Theology*, is the best available analysis of Mackintosh to date.⁶⁵ Redman focuses on the christological and soteriological aspects of Mackintosh's theology, and he has contributed several important, shorter articles to the corpus of work on Mackintosh. Second only to Redman's work in significance is the dissertation on Mackintosh published by James W. Leitch under the direction of Barth. Leitch looks primarily at Mackintosh's doctrine of God, and he diligently traces the many

⁶² J. K. Mozley, *Recent Tendencies in British Theology* (London: SPCK, 1951), 140-143; P. S. Watson, "The Kenosis Doctrine in H. R. Mackintosh's *The Person of Jesus Christ*," in *Expository Times* 64 (1952-53): 68-71; T. W. Gardiner, "A Tribute to Professor H. R. Mackintosh," in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 5 (1952): 225-236.

⁶³ A. B. Macaulay, "Memoir," in *Sermons*. See also A. Martin, "The Late Very Reverend Professor H. R. Mackintosh," *Life and Work Magazine* 7 (1936): 287-288; J. G. Riddell, "The Late Very Reverend Professor H. R. Mackintosh," *Expository Times* 48 (1937): 6-11.

⁶⁴ Donald M. Baillie, *God Was in Christ: An Essay in Incarnation and Atonement* (New York: Scribner, 1955), 94-98; John McIntyre, *The Shape of Christology* (London: SCM, 1966), 133-134. Both scholars respect the integrity of Mackintosh's kenotic doctrine while pointing out a tendency in Mackintosh's christology to emphasize the humanity of Christ to the exclusion of divinity within the Chalcedonian theory of two natures.

⁶⁵ Robert Redman, Jr., *Reformulating Reformed Theology: Jesus Christ in the Theology of Hugh Ross Mackintosh* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997); "Participatio Christi: H. R. Mackintosh's Theology of the Unio Mystica," in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 49 (1996): 201-222; "H. R. Mackintosh's Contribution to Christology and Soteriology in the Twentieth Century," in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 42 (1988): 517-534.

important connections between Mackintosh and nineteenth century German philosophy and theology.⁶⁶ Apart from these two scholars, there is no other probing, in-depth examination of Mackintosh's theology.⁶⁷

Brunner was born in 1889 in Winterthur, Switzerland, near Zurich, and from the start of his life he was highly steeped in Swiss Reformed theology. His grandfather was a minister in the Reformed Church, and Brunner called Hermann Kutter, the pastor who catechized him, "the greatest man" he ever knew. Brunner breathed in the air of Swiss political culture, politics, and history, and his Swiss nationality was the first major influence to shape his thinking. Brunner's later writings on the nature and responsibilities of government and political freedom display this heritage, and he became an adamant critic of totalitarianism when such movements were on the rise in the twentieth century. It is clear to see how his theology was shaped and guided by the Reformed tradition in his native country. This influence was so pervasive that Brunner begins his intellectual biography by extolling the virtues of Swiss history and culture before anything else.⁶⁸

Brunner's professional interest in theology and ministry began when he studied theology at the universities of Zurich and Berlin, and he became a minister in the Swiss Reformed Church in 1912. He received his Doctor of Theology degree from Zurich in 1913, and in this same year he began a two-year stint teaching in a high school in Leeds, England, while honing his skills in the English language. Upon the outbreak of the First World War, he returned to Switzerland and served in the Swiss militia. From 1916-1924, Brunner pastored in the mountain village of Obstalden,

⁶⁶ Leitch, *A Theology of Transition*, 7-35.

⁶⁷ There is a helpful and well-written unpublished dissertation by Donald Corbett in which he inspects the soteriological aspects of Mackintosh's work. See D. J. M Corbett, "The Moral Aspect of the Atonement in Scottish Theology from David Dickson to James Denny and H. R. Mackintosh," Dissertation, New College, Edinburgh, 1965, 232-248.

⁶⁸ Emil Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography," in *The Theology of Emil Brunner*, ed. Charles Kegley (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), 3.

interrupted only in 1919 for a year of study at Union Theological Seminary in New York. From 1924-1955, he occupied the Chair of Systematic and Practical Theology at the University of Zurich. The title of this position is significant because Brunner always viewed the practice of theology as a service to the church. As a theologian, he regarded himself as a teacher of pastors, and he believed that the task of theology was the edification of the church and the increasing of the faith of Christian believers.⁶⁹ From his position in Zurich, Brunner made frequent lecture tours around the world, and he considered the highlight of his career the time he spent in Japan from 1953-1955 as he helped to build up the International Christian University in Tokyo. Despite suffering from several strokes late in his life, Brunner continued to preach and write in Zurich until his death on April 6, 1966.

From individual monographs to his three-volume *Dogmatics*, Brunner's thought is highly inclusive of eschatological concepts and themes, and the twin concepts of eschatology and hope play central roles in Brunner's comprehensive theological outlook. As one of the outstanding theologians of the twentieth century, Brunner emphasizes the vital relevance of eschatology for faith, thereby greatly enhancing contemporary theology's approach to this doctrine. Brunner believes that hope is the essence of Christian belief, and as a consequence hope pervades the entirety of faith. One consequently finds in Brunner's theology an eschatological emphasis that informs numerous other areas of doctrine, including time and eternity, theological anthropology, sin, atonement, and more — all of which Brunner discerns as decisive for eschatology. Because Brunner contributed so immensely to the development of twentieth century Reformed eschatology, he serves as the second

⁶⁹ Echoing the sentiment of Mackintosh, Brunner says: "Real theology is not only for experts, but it is for all to whom religious questions are also a problem of thought." Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947), 11.

subject of this examination into the century of eschatology. Even though his influence was significant in mid-twentieth century theology, his role in the development of doctrine has been neglected by recent theological trends, and it is ironic that a recovery of his work should be necessary.⁷⁰

Jürgen Moltmann has been one of the most prolific theologians in the second half of the twentieth century, and his writings encompass numerous areas of theological inquiry and doctrine. Moltmann has been tremendously affected by the cataclysmic world events of the twentieth century, and it was out of these experiences that he developed such an astounding appreciation for the value of Christian hope and eschatology. He was born in 1926, and he points to the experience he had as a prisoner of war as his first real encounter with God.⁷¹ Moltmann experienced God as a source of comfort in suffering and as a source of hope for the future, and these two themes would come to dominate his theological perspective throughout his career. Clearly, his experiences as a prisoner and the reconciliation he found with former enemies were highly significant in the formation of his faith and theological outlook. God's presence in suffering and God's provision of hope would come to be the complementary pillars which support his work from top to bottom.

⁷⁰ Mark McKim asks: "Whatever happened to Emil Brunner? The prominent Swiss theologian, who died in 1966, has largely disappeared from the Protestant theological enterprise; certainly this is the case in North America. At first glance this appears most unusual. Brunner was a major figure in the neo-orthodox movement. Indeed, he was the first to introduce the new theology to the English-speaking world, and a whole generation of seminary students were introduced to theology via Brunner. He lectured widely in Great Britain and the United States. A list of his publications runs to dozens of pages and includes major works on anthropology, soteriology, ethics, the nature of truth, and a systematic theology. Brunner's writing is not only more succinct than that of Karl Barth, it also places great emphasis on the practical mission of the church. Given the scope of his interests, many of which remain pressing issues for contemporary theology, and that his dialectic method often found a middle way between the extremes in which much contemporary theology is mired, revisiting Brunner would seem a worthwhile exercise." Mark G. McKim, "Brunner the Ecumenist: Emil Brunner as a *Vox Media* of Protestant Theology," in *Calvin Theological Journal* 32 (April 1997): 91-104.

⁷¹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1997), 7.

The shaping of Moltmann's theological mind came at the University of Göttingen, where he began his studies in 1948 upon his return to Germany after the war. Moltmann has always been deeply indebted to the work of Barth, yet there are others who also guided his theological learning in crucially important ways. Otto Weber, Ernst Wolf, Hans Joachim Iwand, Gerhard von Rad, Ernst Käsemann, and, most notably, the Jewish Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch all played significant roles in giving Moltmann his theological moorings.⁷² Moltmann's early impression as a student was that Barth's theology could hardly be improved upon, yet the above mentioned figures aided him in developing his own perspectives which would indeed move him in directions beyond Barth.

There are many identifying markers that point the way through twentieth century theology, and Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* is just such a pointer that shows the direction of theology in the final one-third of the century. Moltmann is ultimately concerned with how eschatology pervades and informs all other areas of theology because all theology has an eschatological dimension to it. Indeed, one must point to Moltmann as a driving force behind the effort that made the twentieth century the "century of eschatology."

Moltmann served as a Professor of Systematic Theology from 1967 to 1994 at the University of Tübingen, and from there his theological influence has spread far beyond the Western world. In addition to *Theology of Hope*, Moltmann's best-known early works include *The Crucified God* and *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. Although each of these works addresses a different aspect of theology, each one also

⁷² See Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark: 1995), 1-3. Bauckham has enormously contributed to the interpretation of Moltmann in the last two decades. See his *Moltmann: Messianic Theology in the Making* (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1987), and a collection of essays edited by Bauckham, *God Will Be All in All: The Eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999).

underlines Moltmann's commitment to a commanding presentation of systematic theology. The 1980's and 1990's witnessed a burst of theological activity from Moltmann with the publication of several works that, when taken together, contribute to his overall exposition of doctrine.⁷³ These works and innumerable essays by Moltmann demonstrate his deep knowledge of historical theology and his reliance upon the past to make his own invaluable contributions to modern theology.

Assessing the respective places of Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann within the Reformed Tradition begins with seeing their reliance upon some of its hallmark themes as well as their reactions to the larger theological and philosophical climate around them. Each of them sees their work in the continuum of Christian thought from the Patristic period through nearly two millennia of doctrinal development, and they are indebted to certain aspects of their particular tradition while remaining open and appreciative to other influences.

Revelation in Scripture

Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann rely heavily on a theology of revelation as the starting point of all theological discussion. God's personal self-disclosure forms the foundation of the biblical concept of history, as God continually reveals his purposes and his will for humanity in a progression of revelations. Mackintosh,

⁷³ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1981); *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1985); *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1990); *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001); and *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1996).

Brunner, and Moltmann believe that humanity can never achieve knowledge of God within the framework of its own inherent possibilities. Therefore, humanity is dependent upon the divine revelations which make God accessible to human knowledge and devotion. The absolute "wholly other-ness" of God necessitates condescension on God's part if humanity is to have any saving knowledge of God whatsoever. Their zeal to emphasize the transcendence of God is driven by their desire to move in directions far away from a theological conception of the essential unity between God and humanity. They similarly agree that scripture should be trusted in its recording of the miraculous events of divine action that occur when God speaks, saves, heals, and calls. Even though scripture contains the ancient world-view of its writers, the revelation of God through scripture is larger than the world-views in which it is written and explained.⁷⁴

Each of them places great stress on the concept of divine revelation, as opposed to human aspiration, as the starting point for one's knowledge of God. The Reformed emphasis on revelation maintains that the sovereign and free God chooses to reveal himself to men and women in order to draw them into a saving relationship. While it is true that God reveals himself in the natural world, the Reformed Tradition has consistently viewed God's revelation of his saving will as occurring in scripture and, ultimately, in the person of Jesus Christ. In regard to God's written Word, each possesses a high regard for scripture as the locus of God's unique revelation of divine saving activity within the world.⁷⁵ The Westminster Confession affirms that the

⁷⁴ For more on the Reformed Tradition's concept of revelation in scripture, see Donald G. Bloesch, *Holy Scripture: Revelation, Inspiration, and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), chapter 3.; Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1983), 46.

⁷⁵ In many ways, this is a renewed emphasis in Reformation-era theology, looking back to ancient views on the authority and uniqueness of Scripture's revelation, especially in figures like Origen and Augustine. See Origen, *Contra Celsum*, ed. & trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953); Augustine, *City of God*, ed. & trans. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), XV, 8 & XVIII, 41.

authority of scripture "dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God."⁷⁶ Each theologian agrees with the spirit of the confession as it proclaims the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the unique and authoritative witness to God, and yet their modern context demands a careful approach to Scripture that takes into account the massive shifts in biblical studies since the seventeenth century.

As theologians of the twentieth century, they are highly aware of the critical views toward scripture brought about by contemporary methods of textual criticism and inquiry. Their methodology toward the Bible responds to the broad drive to "demythologize" biblical writings from a variety of vantage points, a move that began in the eighteenth century and gained momentum in the middle decades of the twentieth century.⁷⁷ In regard to eschatology, especially, each theologian desires to value the meaning of eschatological symbols without being constrained to interpret these symbols with uncritical literalism. Against nineteenth century philosophical attacks on biblical theology, Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann believe that scripture may be trusted as the authoritative revelation of God's will for the future.⁷⁸

This agreement regarding scripture leads to a shared opinion that one of the main goals behind demythologizing is a desire to make eschatological themes in the Bible more palatable to modern minds.⁷⁹ The rationale behind demythologizing is

⁷⁶ *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, I.4.

⁷⁷ See Henning Graf Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985). For another survey see Donald McKim, *The Bible in Theology and Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).

⁷⁸ Examples of nineteenth century philosophical distrust of Scripture as the ground for revelation may be found in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Lewis S. Feuer (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1959); Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, trans. James Strachey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950); Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, trans. W. D. Robson-Scott (New York: Liveright Publishing Corp., 1955).

⁷⁹ The basic premise of Ernst Troeltsch is the foundation of demythologization. He stated that all events in the history of religions have to be subjected to analogy and correlation mainly because the

that the world-view of the Bible is primitive, mythological, and scientifically incompatible within the modern world. Theologians, embarrassed by the mythological and apocalyptic elements of the Bible, sought interpret and re-state them in terms acceptable to contemporary, scientific world-views. They profess that the Bible and theology must be purified of its inadequate, primitive expressions that no longer resonate with modern science and philosophy. The symbolic language of the Bible sounds crude, simplistic, and unintelligible to modern ears.

As capable exegetes of Scripture, Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann part ways with those who would insist on demythologizing scripture as part of the process of interpretation.⁸⁰ They acknowledge that the task of a theologian is to restate and reinterpret the meaning of theological convictions in ways that incorporate a contemporary world-view. While granting that an ancient world-view employs expressions and symbols which are not adequate to the events that they attempt to convey, the language of the Bible is nevertheless the vehicle of God's revelation.⁸¹ They likewise assess that the strength of a Reformed view of Scripture is the tradition's insistence upon the work of the Holy Spirit in guiding the task of interpretation. Calvin's view that "the testimony of the Spirit is more excellent than all reason" does not negate the tools of critical reasoning. Instead, these tools are used at the disposal of the theologian who trusts that the Spirit of God will enlighten the interpreter to the meaning of the text: "The same Spirit...who has spoken through the mouths of the

New Testament documents are historically unreliable. These documents emerge, not from the time of Jesus himself, but from the years following his life and from the pens of enthusiastic followers who exaggerated the events surrounding his life. For more, see Wilhelm Pauck, *Harnack and Troeltsch: Two Historical Theologians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 66-67.

⁸⁰ In particular, Brunner and Moltmann contend with the theology of Rudolph Bultmann in the second half of the twentieth century. For a first-hand look at Bultmann's thought behind demythologizing, see his "New Testament and Mythology," in *New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings*, trans. & ed. Shubert M. Ogden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); Bultmann, "History and Eschatology in the New Testament," *New Testament Studies* 1 (1954-55): 5-16; for Brunner's extended critique of Bultmann and an analysis of demythologization, see *Dogmatics*, v. 3, 263ff.

⁸¹ I. Howard Marshall, *Biblical Inspiration* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), chap. 3.

prophets must penetrate into our hearts to persuade us that they faithfully proclaimed what had been divinely commanded."⁸² Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann alike agree that Scripture reveals both God's past actions and God's current will to those who trust the Holy Spirit's illumination of events in history when they are examined by modern minds.

In their respective approaches to revelation through scripture, they agree that the Bible contains "mythological" speech pertaining to God because God's actions and words must be accommodated to the human mind.⁸³ They acknowledge that many points of doctrine have their roots in apocalyptic symbols that defy easy interpretation, so they approach the interpretation of scripture with a desire to glean religious truth from acculturated words, while asserting that behind conditioned texts lie certain truths which are unconditioned and absolute. Each acknowledges modern theology's debt to historical criticism and the better understanding of texts which such criticism produces. It is especially true that many aspects of biblical eschatology are manifested in highly symbolic texts that portray a particular, cultural world-view. The truth and meaning of a text, however, are not negated when a particular world-view or its symbols become obsolete. And so they can take into account the critics who unlock much of the cultural climate lying behind certain texts and acknowledge that historical circumstances and several pre-Christian elements helped to shape the thought-world of the New Testament.

⁸² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles; Library of Christian Classics, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1.7.4.

⁸³ Accommodation has a long history in the Reformed Tradition. See Ford Lewis Battles, "God Was Accommodating Himself to Human Capacity," in *Readings in Calvin's Theology*, ed. Donald McKim (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), chapter 2.

Departing from the tradition's earlier arguments on the strict inerrancy of Scripture,⁸⁴ these three theologians hold what may be termed as a "critically respectful" view of the divine inspiration of Scripture.⁸⁵ This view acknowledges that scripture is not inerrant and that it does contain discrepancies, yet it is nevertheless the inspired Word of God. For each of them, the written Word is the means by which the living Word of God, Jesus Christ, is known.⁸⁶ By concentrating on the Living Word of Jesus Christ as the content of Scripture's revelation, our three theologians avoid being trapped in a literalistic interpretation of each eschatological image in Scripture.

The Centrality of Jesus Christ

Although they use different terminology, each theologian subscribes to a view of Jesus Christ as the ultimate revelation of God and of God's will for human life. The core of God's revelation to humanity is his unique self-disclosure in the person of Jesus Christ, and in Christ God has freely chosen to make known the divine will for humanity. God has made himself available to humanity in definite places at distinct times, yet all revelation is subject to God's personal revelation in the divine-human person who perfectly revealed God.

Mackintosh employs the christological principle of interpreting all of scripture through the teachings of Christ, and Christ serves as the final authority for all faith

⁸⁴ For an account of inerrancy in Calvin's thought, see Roger R. Nicole, "John Calvin and Inerrancy," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 25 (December 1982), 425-442; Harvie M. Conn, *Inerrancy and Hermeneutics: A Tradition, a Challenge, a Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988).

⁸⁵ For a detailed definition of this critically respectful view, see G. C. Berkouwer, "The Testimony of the Spirit," in *Holy Scripture*, ed. & trans. Jack Rogers (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), 139-142.

⁸⁶ The same sentiment captured by Barth in his *Theological Declaration of Barmen*: "Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we hear and which have to trust and obey in life and in death." *Theological Declaration of Barmen*, in *Book of Confessions*, 8.11.

and life. When perplexing issues arise in theology or in reading scripture, Mackintosh falls back on the centrality of Christ for all Christian understanding: "There is a criterion, and it may be formulated quite simply. It is the very criterion we use elsewhere in doctrine; and it is as good for eschatology as for truth about providence, or sin, or atonement. It is the Person of Jesus, in His sovereign redeeming power, as apprehended by the faith which in Him finds God."⁸⁷ All aspects of theology, ethics, and personal piety are guided by what Christ taught and revealed. Matters of controversy in doctrine and church life must be mediated through the lenses of the will of Christ as revealed primarily in the gospel accounts.

Likewise for Brunner, the revelation of God in Jesus Christ forms the crucible of God's relationship and dealings with humanity. Jesus Christ reveals both God and what humanity should be in relation to its creator. Brunner's theology is in many ways christocentric because he continually states that the origin and goal of Christian theology are Jesus Christ as he reveals the love and holiness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.⁸⁸ His entire approach to a theological understanding of time and history is based on the premise that both are given their meaning and direction through God's revelation of Jesus Christ within time.

Moltmann also emphasizes the necessity of interpreting all of theology through the life and death of Jesus Christ. Moltmann gained much of this insight through the influence of his teacher Hans Iwand. Iwand, whose emphasis on the dialectic of cross and resurrection, had a profound impact on Moltmann's thinking regarding the centrality of Christ. It was Iwand who taught Moltmann always to ask in what ways God reveals himself through nature as opposed to the type of "special revelation" through Christ that is heavily emphasized in Protestant theology from

⁸⁷ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 128.

⁸⁸ Jewett, *Brunner's Concept of Revelation*, 70ff.

Calvin to Barth. Thus, knowledge of God is found in Christ only through the gift of faith through grace, and this is God's mediated, special revelation to humanity.

The dominant themes of comfort and hope in Moltmann's theology draw upon his interpretations of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ and their role as transforming events in the relationship between humanity and God. The cross is illustrative of life now with all its incumbent suffering, hardship, and injustice, while the resurrection reveals the direct opposite of this god forsakenness. Moltmann's theology resonates with this dialectic of cross/resurrection, so much so that they are always qualified by each other. The godlessness of the crucifixion is responded to by the hopefulness of the resurrection, and the newness of life promised in the resurrection incorporates the painful meaning of the cross.

Philosophical Influences

Each theologian possesses a trend in their theology that is open to maintaining a dialogue with many areas of ancient and modern philosophy throughout their work. They are indebted to certain aspects of philosophy without slavishly binding their theology to any one philosophical system. Each goes to great lengths to analyze the ways in which Christian theology has been affected by humanity's advancements in philosophic world-views, from the days of the early church to their own day. Because each is attuned to the history of philosophy, they are each able to engage capably many viewpoints as they either correspond to or conflict with crucial elements of Christian theology. A survey of their work quickly reveals their intellectual grasp of philosophical trends in modern thought. They critically analyze nineteenth and

twentieth century philosophical movements, and there are important aspects of modern philosophy that each theologian relies upon to inform their respective approaches to theology.

In response to the highly influential figure of nineteenth century philosophy, G. W. F. Hegel, Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann alike continually engage the work of Hegel and his dominating legacy in twentieth century theology. Mackintosh believes that nineteenth century theology ignored vital components of biblical theology in favor of Hegel's ideal of unity between all things. According to Hegel, all of history and all changes in space and time are merely being enveloped by the all-encompassing "Spirit of the universe." The universe/cosmic creation is a self-contained entity, and history is the process of God's own self-realization.

Man, for [Hegel] is a finite spirit; as such, however, he ultimately identical with infinite Spirit; and perhaps from the standpoint of Christian faith the most sinister feature in the entire construction is the emphasis laid on this further point, that it is in the development of the finite mind that the Infinite and Absolute, or God, first rises to consciousness of self. "God," Hegel writes in words as plain as any, "is God only in so far as He knows Himself; His self-knowledge is His self-consciousness in man, is the knowledge man has *of* God, which advances to man's self-knowledge *in* God." This, it would appear, the Absolute has reality only in the thought of those who believe in Him. And history is now seen to be God's realization of Himself through, or in, the process of human experience.⁸⁹

This pantheistic unity between finite humans and the Infinite God is untenable for Mackintosh because God, the Absolute mind, is indeed not unified with humanity as the essence of all finite minds. Creation is distinct from the "wholly other" God, and in their theology individuals are not constituents of God in the process of a seamless absorption into the universe.

Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann, consequently, appreciate yet reject much of the theological impulses of Hegel because the differences between God and

⁸⁹ Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*, 103.

the universe, between Creator and creation, between the Absolute and the relative, are collapsed at the expense of both the personal God and individual persons. The universe becomes an impersonal system that has no larger interest in any individual part, not the least of which is human life. An impersonal system has no desire for communion and redemption, and there is no sense of progression and development, for good or evil, in the world. The fate of each human being is met by the unsympathetic silence of the universe. If God and the universe are the same entity, then ethics and individuals becomes meaningless: the best a person can hope for as a result of this life is absorption into the universe.

In contrast to Hegelian Idealism, Mackintosh emphasizes that the Christian doctrines of God and theological anthropology rely on a concept of related, yet distinct, personhood. Human persons, created in God's image, freely act with purpose and creative force. It is the endowment of God's image which makes a person capable of acting and of entering relationships. First and foremost in the universe is the will of a personal God. God is the supreme personality whose will propels the world into the future by a series of sovereign acts. God desires communion with individual personalities, and the loss of any person is a tragic event. Because creation is dynamic and is filled with personalities who act in freedom, there is real development and a real end, and the end comes out of the development of history.

Like Mackintosh, Brunner seeks to steer a theological course between the legacies of nineteenth century scientific materialism and philosophical idealism. Brunner is exceptionally well-read in the history of philosophy, and he understands both the subtle and monumental ways in which philosophical approaches shape theological beliefs. It was through the mentoring of Kutter that Brunner developed his life-long engagement with the field of philosophy as he worked out a system of

belief that was scientifically and philosophically satisfying -- as well as faithful to Christian experience and doctrine.

Brunner laments his perception that the legacy of Hegel in much of modern philosophy is philosophy's preference for abstract language to describe God. Deemed to be a purer language than biblical symbols, philosophy seeks to replace the vivid images of scripture with abstract concepts and explanations. Brunner criticizes the drive to replace biblical language with philosophical terms so that the more abstract the explanation is the more "spiritual" it appears to be. Brunner decisively refuses to allow theology to acquiesce to the abstract language of philosophy, as he sees it, because philosophical language too easily dismisses the rich symbols for the personal God of the Bible. Responding primarily to Hegel, Brunner observes that in Idealism "the 'Lord of all being' is supplanted by 'being' itself; the 'Thou' who addresses men is replaced by an 'it' which man himself conceives; instead of the God who acts, we find a changeless timeless being, a timeless truth. The Biblical world of the living God is transmuted into the Platonic world of ideas, into the ontology of timeless being."⁹⁰ Brunner maintains that if one is to speak faithfully about God then one must believe in the God who personally encounters human beings as distinct persons who were created to live in a relationship with God.

The dominant philosophical impulse in Brunner is a form of "personalism," which came to Brunner through the work of Ferdinand Ebner and Martin Buber and has its roots in the work of Kierkegaard.⁹¹ Personalism is based on the assumption that to be a person ("I") necessarily means to be related to someone else ("thou").

⁹⁰ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 116.

⁹¹ Ferdinand Ebner, *Das Wort und die geistigen Realitäten, Pneumatologische Fragmente* (Innsbruck: Brenner Verlag, 1921); Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald G. Smith (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1937); See also Leon Hynson, "Theological Encounter: Brunner and Buber," in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 12 (1975): 349-366; Helmut Gollwitzer, "The Significance of Martin Buber for Protestant Theology," in *Martin Buber: A Centenary Volume*, ed. Haim Gordon & Jochanan Bloch, (New York: KTAV Publishers, 1984).

God is the Thou who confronts human beings in personal encounter. Ebner and Buber, in many ways independent of each other, developed a personalistic philosophy of human existence based on the premise that the human person (I) is brought into existence and remains in relationship to God (Thou). Ebner writes:

Presupposed that human existence in its kernel has a spiritual significance, viz., a significance which is not exhausted in its natural manifestation in the course of world event; presupposed that one may speak of something spiritual in man otherwise than in the sense of a fiction of a poetic or metaphoric nature, or of a fiction demanded on "social" grounds: then this spiritual something is essentially defined thereby that it is fundamentally connected with something spiritual outside of it, through which and in which it exists....If then, in order to have a word for it, we call this spiritual entity *in* man, I, and that which is *outside* of him, in relationship to which the "I" exists, thou.⁹²

In a similar manner, Buber's small, but most famous work, *I and Thou*, emphasizes the personalistic ground of life by contrasting the personal nature of faith, which involves the whole person before God in the I-Thou relationship, to the impersonal, partial relationship between a person and a thing (I-It). A thing never demands total sway over the individual as God does in a relationship of faith. From his perspective as a Jewish existentialist, Buber believes that God addresses human beings in a personal encounter, and this is a liberating and life-giving experience.⁹³

It is important to note that both Ebner and Buber draw upon Kierkegaard's insight into the nature of humanity in relation to God. Kierkegaard reacts against Hegel's tendency to denude the individual person of his uniqueness, and Kierkegaard laments Hegel's failure to distinguish between God and the individual. Whereas Hegel emphasizes the unity or continuity between God and humanity, Kierkegaard accentuates, by way of contrast, the dissonance and gulf between God and humanity

⁹² Ebner, *Das Wort und die geistigen Realitäten*, 12. As quoted by Paul Jewett, "Ebnerian Personalism and its Influence Upon Brunner's Theology," in *The Westminster Theological Journal* 14 (1952): 120.

⁹³ Buber, *I and Thou*, 106-120.

that God overcomes through personal encounter. Through Buber and Ebner, Brunner engages the Kierkegaardian insight that humanity exists in a relationship with God that is made possible -- not through humanity's immanent closeness with God -- but through God's encountering humanity so as to bridge the chasm that divides them. Each individual stands in the juncture of time and eternity at the moment of being addressed by God.

The Kierkegaardian influence of personalism upon Brunner runs deep into his theology, and Brunner consistently maintains that Christian faith is always and only a personal relationship between the individual "I" and the "Thou" of God. God encounters the individual person to establish a relationship, and it is through this encounter that the individual understands his true existence.⁹⁴ Brunner draws upon the Kierkegaardian conception of the human person to expound upon his belief that the human person, as distinct from God, is a free, decision-making being. This human freedom, which is intrinsic to human personality, is absolutely essential to the moment of confrontation between God and humanity in that one's freedom allows for the decision for or against God. Brunner emphasizes the personal nature of both God and humanity throughout so much of his work. Faith is the result of the divine-human encounter, and it is this sense of encounter that inspires and fuels human faith in God.⁹⁵

Moltmann is also well-versed in the history of Western philosophy, and he addresses much of modern philosophical thought throughout his work. He appreciates and engages the legacy of Hegel, among others, and he maintains a

⁹⁴ As Paul Jewett writes: "It is this Kierkegaardian Individual who becomes, in Brunner, following the lead of Ebner, a Person confronted with the divine Thou. And the mediation of time and eternity in the individual in the passionate decision of the moment (Kierkegaard) likewise furnishes the fundamental structure of Brunner's divine-human encounter." Jewett, "Ebnerian Personalism," 114.

⁹⁵ Brunner presents this theme of Kierkegaard throughout *The Divine-Human Encounter* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1943).

dialogue with Hegelian philosophy throughout his work. Iwand introduced Moltmann to Hegel's dialectic of the cross and resurrection, and in doing so he prepared the ground on which Moltmann would address and appropriate the work of Hegel into his theology. For Moltmann, this meant dealing with the alienation and meaninglessness of human existence that were brought about as a result of Enlightenment-age reasoning. Hegel interprets the cross of Christ as part of the universal human experience of alienation and god-forsakenness. The human experience of suffering in history is met by the God's desire to reconcile the pain of humanity through the self-giving and self-revealing love of the Spirit. For Hegel, the cross and resurrection of Christ become symbolic of the Spirit's universal self-revelation throughout history, and yet Hegel denies that these events have any particular and absolute significance as events in history.⁹⁶ They are merely part of the Spirit's reconciliation of humanity with the universe. Moltmann relies on Hegel's dialectic of cross and resurrection, yet Moltmann's perspective of these events views their historicity as essential to God's dealing with humanity.

In addition to those whom Moltmann studied under personally, one of the most significant conversation partners with Moltmann in his theology is the Marxist Jewish philosopher Ernst Bloch, whom Moltmann relies upon throughout his writings. Moltmann writes: "In 1960 I discovered Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope*. I read it in the East German edition during a holiday in Switzerland and was so fascinated that I ceased to see the beauty of the mountains. My spontaneous impression was, 'Why has Christian theology let go of its most distinctive theme, hope?...I wanted to undertake a parallel action in Christianity on the basis of its own presuppositions.'"⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Meeks, *Origins of the Theology of Hope*, 35.

⁹⁷ Moltmann, *How I Have Changed: Reflections on Thirty Years of Theology* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), 15

Moltmann recognizes in Bloch the relevance of Jewish messianism for Christianity, and Moltmann's work is highly indebted to Jewish principles of hope that find fulfillment in Jesus Christ.⁹⁸ Moltmann believes that orthodox Christian theology had transformed eschatology into other-worldly concerns, making it the appendix of Christian doctrine. From Bloch Moltmann ascertained that Christian hope must be placed within the framework of Messianic expectation and that Jesus is the Jewish teacher of hope and the kingdom of God.⁹⁹ Hence, Moltmann's theological project has been to move eschatology from the appendix to the center of Christian doctrine through the means provided by Bloch.

The magnitude of Bloch for Moltmann can be seen in many different areas, especially in Moltmann's treatment of the concept of revelation in history: history is not a limited, closed system with its own end determined by its own functioning principles. History is, to the contrary, open to the promises of God and to the fulfillment of these promises in the Kingdom of God. Bloch influences Moltmann toward an acute reliance on the concept of "promise" as it relates to the future of God. As Moltmann states: "The gospel of the revelation of God in Christ is thus in danger of being incomplete and of collapsing altogether, if we fail to notice the dimension of promise in it. Christology likewise deteriorates if the dimension of the 'future of Christ' is not regarded as a constitutive element in it."¹⁰⁰ It is the promise of God as revealed in Christ, especially through the resurrection that gives rise to Moltmann's

⁹⁸ Bauckham, *Messianic Theology*, 9-14.

⁹⁹ Müller-Fahrholz writes: "I would like to put it this way: the work of the Leipzig philosopher served as a catalyst for Moltmann's theological question. It opened his eyes to a theme which is one of the nuclei of the Christian message, but which lay hidden under a placid and assimilated Christianity, like a glow under a thick layer of ash. Moltmann recognized in the unruly and passionate temperament of the Marxist thinker, who was so unpalatable to his Marxist masters that in 1962 they forced him into exile in Tübingen, his own passionate unrest, his own urgent impatience. *Theology of Hope* is none other than an attempt to free the glow and kindle the fire afresh, faithful to Jesus' messianic cry: 'I have come to kindle fire on the earth; and how I wish it were already burning! (Luke 12:49)'" Geiko Müller-Fahrholz, *The Kingdom and the Power: The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 43.

¹⁰⁰ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 140.

future-oriented eschatology. The category of promise means that the future is open to the power of God because the divine promise pronounces a future that is not a present reality. The promise of God's future is not bound to the realities of the present but to the potentiality of God. The fulfillment of God's promise is what matters for the present, and the future that it promises determines the goal toward which history is moving. In many ways, the future of the promise of God stands in contradiction to the deadly realities of the present world, and Christians are compelled to live by the future history of God and not according to the world of death.¹⁰¹

The Legacy of Scientific Materialism

Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann know that they must incorporate into their theology aspects which deal with scientific materialism and a world-view that limits, at best, or excludes, at worst, the possibility of God's influence over the natural world. They are well-attuned to the contemporary scientific outlooks in their respective twentieth century contexts, and they consistently addresses the manifestations of materialism as they relate particularly to theology and eschatology. They are content to make theological assertions without assessing their ramifications for other areas of human knowledge. The legacy of eighteenth and nineteenth century materialism was a sweeping attitude that the laws of nature are such that they disallow any divine activity from outside the closed system that is the world. Anything that cannot be verified empirically cannot be accepted as true, especially in dealing with the ancient past and the claims of "primitive," unscientific people. Volumes such as Julien Offray de la Mettrie's *Man as Machine* and von Holbach's *System of Nature*

¹⁰¹ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 102-106.

sought to give psychological and empirical explanations to spiritual processes.¹⁰² They conclude that humanity is simply a product of the surrounding environment that operates only according to the powers of the natural laws around it. Materialism would have us believe that what is true conforms to what science ascertains regarding humanity, the world, and all reality.

For Mackintosh, science alone cannot become the ground which either validates or invalidates theological truths, but as a systematic theologian he realize the necessity of engaging other disciplines while serving their own. "A work of revision," Mackintosh writes, "is become necessary to detect the dead matter lodged in tradition, and to replace 'categories with which the mind will not work any more' by conceptions which really help us to exhibit the hope actually cherished by believers."¹⁰³ Mackintosh, especially in his earlier work, is often critical of the church's defense of rigid orthodoxy at the expense contemporary thought, and he seeks to engage fairly with science as he dislodges arcane arguments while maintaining the integrity of theology.

In his engagement with modern science, Mackintosh is mainly concerned to show that science and theology are occupied with answering different questions regarding creation and humanity. Mackintosh believes that the scientific mind can conceive only cause and effect relationships between all things -- living or inanimate. For science's purposes, the universe exists merely in a continual process of change without beginning or end. Each effect has a cause as far back as anyone can discern, and each cause engenders an effect into the unknown future. In the rationale of materialism, human life is part of the larger cosmological flux that is always in

¹⁰² Julien Offray de la Mettrie (1709-1751), *Machine Man and Other Writings*, ed. & trans. Ann Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Max P. Cushing, *Baron d'Holbach: A Study of Eighteenth Century Radicalism in France* (New York: B. Franklin, 1971); Georgii V. Plekhanov, *Essays in the History of Materialism*, trans. Ralph Fox (New York: Fertig Publishers, 1934).

¹⁰³ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 109.

turmoil, without a definable beginning or a discernable end. Christian eschatology, in contrast, with its pronouncements about the future of the universe, is opposed to this way of thinking. Christian eschatology espouses a hopeful vision by which life and the world will reach a fulfillment in God, while science can offer only approximations regarding the end of the physical system.

Although he engages the perspectives of science and philosophy, especially in regard to eschatology, Mackintosh does so without surrendering theology to the arguments of materialism. While theology and faith do make claims on the powers and limitations of physical systems, Mackintosh contends that theology should not attempt to make claims regarding the mechanical functioning of the universe. Mackintosh prefers to draw a clear line of demarcation between the topics and areas that are unique to theology and science, and he believes that the arguments of either are compromised if this boundary line is crossed. It belongs only to theology to claim that life is created by God and that not even death can separate humans from God. By the same token, it is within science's domain alone to address the natural and physical processes by which people are born, live, and die. Mackintosh maintains throughout his writings a clear-cut distinction between the realms of expertise claimed by theology and those claimed by science and philosophy.

While affirming that questions concerning the physical and natural future of the universe are best answered by scientists and not theologians, Mackintosh claims that the reality of the eschatological future is not doomed or affirmed by scientific theories of the human race or the destruction of the planet. From theology's point of view, the extinction of humanity would make no difference to what God has promised for those who love God. While Mackintosh never advocates an irresponsible ethic toward the natural world, he does state that the final history of the universe is

irrelevant to the Christian hope for humanity: “The new transcendent order belongs to a new plane of being. How or when reality will be vouchsafed to the perfect kingdom -- after the disappearance of the earth or before -- we have no interest in deciding, even if decision were possible, for Christian hope is set not upon a future condition of the world, but on God.”¹⁰⁴ Eschatology's claims for God's kingdom and eternal life would not be contradicted by the extinction of the human race because it is not ourselves and our continuation that matters most for the future -- but God's.

In a way similar to Mackintosh, Brunner endorses the advances of modern sciences on many fronts, and he especially addresses the implications which complex and contemporary scientific outlooks have for eschatology. Throughout his work, Brunner strives to interpret the eschatological proclamations of the Bible in a manner that is both faithful to the source and cognizant of a contemporary world-view.¹⁰⁵ As Brunner interprets the symbolic language of the New Testament concerning history and eschatology, he is aware of a fundamentalist strain in Christianity that ignores the views of modern science regarding the universe and natural laws. Eschatological hope based solely on a literal reading of biblical material is not possible because the images are contained within the world-view of the ancient writers. Also, because the Bible provides too many descriptions and visions of the eschatological future, any one of them should not be accepted as dominant over the rest. The Bible's depictions of the eschatological future are too varied for there to be a literal reading of the texts which excludes a modern world-view.

¹⁰⁴ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 121.

¹⁰⁵ More recently, Michael Welker demonstrates how “eschatological symbol systems” should be used in the process of interpreting scriptures manifold witness to the eschatological future. Michael Welker, “Theological Realism and Eschatological Symbol Systems,” in *Resurrection: Theological and Scientific Assessments*, ed. Ted Peters, Robert J. Russell, and Michael Welker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 31-42.

At the other extreme from unscientific fundamentalism there is a scientific demythologizing of scripture which virtually disregards nearly every account of biblical eschatology. To the materialist, biblical expressions of the eschatological future are merely mythological expressions of less sophisticated and more primitive cultures. If fundamentalism accepts as literally true every account of biblical eschatology, then existentialism rejects as false every account of the eschatological future. Coupled with a demythologizing approach, in Brunner's opinion, is a belief that one can maintain the core elements of Christian faith without believing in the New Testament's unverifiable promises of future, eschatological events. Brunner disregards demythologizing along scientific methods for many of the same reasons that he finds fundamentalism unfaithful. The sheer abundance of the New Testament witness to an eschatological future means that eschatology is part of the core of Christian kerygma, and without an orientation toward the future, faith is not consistent with the biblical witness. Nevertheless, Brunner appreciates what the behavioral and empirical sciences have to say about so many aspects of human life and the cosmos, and he seeks to speak relevantly to science throughout his theology.

In a recent volume, Moltmann writes that "from early on, the theological discussion with scientists fascinated me. When I was a schoolboy I dreamed of studying mathematics and physics."¹⁰⁶ His fascination is evident in the ways in which he seeks to engage science philosophically in his works. He frequently notes how since the scientific revolution, people have exhibited hostility toward theological claims out of materialistic arguments which arise from an increasing awareness of the world's functioning processes. The processes of a dynamic universe in all its complexities lead to an uncertain relation between theological and scientific

¹⁰⁶ Moltmann, *Science and Wisdom*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 2003), 1.

pronouncements in many areas. Yet for Moltmann these areas touch upon each other in significant ways.

We see Moltmann engage the legacy of scientific materialism by analyzing its vigorous attempts to demonstrate the inability of theology to verify its truth claims along traditional lines. Especially critical of Christian eschatology, Feuerbach, as one example, asserts that faith in immortality and the eschatological future is merely a projection of humanity's survival instinct and fear of death. Whatever lives does not want to die, and the fear of death is translated into a desire for a better life after death. "All proofs of immortality are insufficient," claims Feuerbach, because "unassisted reason is not capable of apprehending it, still less proving it."¹⁰⁷ Feuerbach speaks for materialists who disdain the importance given to something as unverifiable and as mythical as the resurrection. For him, "materialists are rationalists" because whatever is material is reasonable, and the resurrection is immaterial and unreasonable. Therefore, Christianity's belief in a soul and its life in heaven, apart from material corporeality, is non-rational and impossible.¹⁰⁸

Moltmann addresses such materialist viewpoints in his theology as he poses metaphysical questions to the physical sciences. He offers insightful critiques to the claim that there is nothing spiritual beyond the material. His theology is an attempt to deny the materialist assumption that humanity is progressing in its technological advancement. Technological progress, for Moltmann, is in many ways a sign of humanity's sinfulness and not progress. New technology enables the subjection of one people to another through advanced methods of warfare and oppression. The idea that humanity does not need religion because humanity will be perfected in the future

¹⁰⁷ Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 135.

¹⁰⁸ Ludwig Feuerbach, "Die Unsterblichkeitsfrage vom Standpunkt der Anthropologie," in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Werner Schuffenhauer (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1973), 10:214.

from within is unacceptable to a theologian who advocates so strongly for the coming of God.

Theology and Social Transformation

One final aspect of the Reformed Tradition should be noted because it is prevalent throughout the work of each theologian, and that is their view that theology necessarily involves both individual and social transformation. The belief that theology has a positive contribution to make to society impresses itself in their work as they discuss the tightly wound connection between theology and ethics – faith and praxis. This aspect of the tradition is obvious from its inception with Calvin's writings on the relationship between church and state and the Christian's role within society.¹⁰⁹ Calvin's argument surrounds the ethical practice of the Christian in relation to the civil government, and he demonstrates the necessity and importance of the Christian's conduct as a shaping influence on civil society. This theme is continued in our three modern theologians of the Calvinist tradition as the importance of Christian ethics runs throughout their work. Personal transformation extends beyond the actions of the individual to include the church's life as the redeemed community of God. The church is meant to live out its calling as a prophet to society, embodying the holiness of God and influencing the surrounding culture as a witness to God's liberation from sin.

Ethics is prominent theme in Mackintosh's work as he insists on the essential link between theology and ethics, and he consistently demonstrates that eschatology is

¹⁰⁹ See Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.4.10.

not aloof from the cries of injustice in the contemporary world. Picking up the challenge of Marxist criticism of religion, Mackintosh asserts that faith deals head on with the realities of a suffering world: "Contemporary injustice deserves the tears and toil of the present generation, so much so that to sit idly by and dream about the future would be irresponsible and unethical toward the raging needs of the present."¹¹⁰ For this reason, his writings focus on the ethical ramifications of different areas of doctrine. Like successor theologians, Mackintosh refuses to separate ethics from eschatology, and he criticizes those for whom eschatology inculcates laxity and irresponsibility toward this world and the practice of Christian ethics.

Mackintosh anticipates later arguments by believing that biblical eschatological visions actually fuel the causes for a better world and that eschatology invigorates moral power in the present. For Mackintosh, the Christian's future destiny is closely related to present attitudes, and Mackintosh calls it a comical endeavor to portray Christianity as irresponsible other-worldliness. The believer prepares himself or herself for a better, richer, fuller future life by living according to its truth and principles here and now. The content of Christian hope is morally qualified and assimilated into the actions and decisions of believers in the present world. Mackintosh resolutely affirms ethical responsibility throughout his eschatological writings, and he often illustrates the inseparable link between eschatology and ethics for Christian faith.

Many of Brunner's works are shaped by his concern for Christian ethics and the necessity of living a life of discipleship based on Christ's example. The Religious Socialist movement in Switzerland played an important role in the shaping of Brunner's thought early on in his career. This movement was introduced to

¹¹⁰ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 124.

Switzerland through the work of the two Blumhardts, Johann and his son Christoph, both of whom were Lutheran pastors in southern Germany. The religious socialist movement came to the fore in Protestant churches as German and Swiss pastors became increasingly sensitive to the terrible plight of the working class and laborers in an industrialized society. One of the younger Blumhardt's close Swiss followers was Brunner's pastor and friend Kutter, and it was his book, *Sie müssen*, that opened Brunner's eyes to the necessity of a Christian response to the social ills of the Industrial Revolution.

Known for his passionate preaching, Kutter inspired and organized Swiss pastors into the Swiss Religious Socialist movement with fiery zeal and rhetorical flair: "Our society makes a parade of morality because it has none; it grows furious over a little scandal to hide its own great scandal. Its morality is the painted shield of immortality."¹¹¹ Two of Brunner's professors at the University of Zurich, P. W. Schmiedel and W. Köhler, schooled Brunner and his contemporaries in the study of Scripture and its application along the lines of social ethics. While in England, Brunner advanced his socialist concerns by becoming familiar with the writings of the leaders of the Christian Labor Movement, including Ramsay MacDonald and Philip Snowden. Within the scope of this movement, he became acquainted with William Temple, with whom he would remain a personal friend.¹¹²

The greatest formative influence on Brunner as a developing theologian was his involvement in the 1920's in the school of thought that would develop the dialectical theologians of the mid-twentieth century. Brunner was highly complimentary of Barth's 1919 *Commentary on Romans*, which is often cited as the spark that ignited the world's interest in dialectical theology. Brunner had already, in

¹¹¹ Hermann Kutter, *They Must; or, God and the Social Democracy*, American edition (Chicago: Co-operative Printing Co., 1906), 176.

¹¹² Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography," 7.

fact, come to many of the same conclusions as Barth, and together, these two theologians led the charge in a recovery of the study of Luther, Calvin, and Kierkegaard, among others.¹¹³

The mark of this movement was its disillusionment with liberal theology brought about by the total devastation of the First World War. The war confirmed that theological liberalism was bankrupt as a social force, and Brunner became engrossed in moving theology beyond Schleiermacher to address the massive ethical needs of the twentieth century. The aims of religious socialism needed to be re-appraised in light of the failure of the movement's ability to address successfully the cultural and political crisis brought about by the war. The fact that so many of Germany's best theological leaders, including Harnack and Herrmann, had sided with Kaiser Wilhelm II's call to war disgusted Brunner and Barth and led them to incorporate ethics into the respective theologies.

Likewise, the praxis of theology is central to Moltmann's theological project. All of Moltmann's early mentors were influenced by Barth's theology and his leadership in the Confessing Church, and all three heavily criticized the German church's complicity with the state under National Socialism. From these gifted teachers, Moltmann learned that the Christian church has a responsibility to be ethically involved in critiquing and examining the society that surrounds it. Like Mackintosh and Brunner before him, Moltmann believed that the purpose of theology was to ground the life of the church in the practical outworking of God's will in people's lives and in the world. Theology is not the domain of heady intellectuals isolated in academia, and therefore one of the main tasks of theology is to keep the church morally engaged with its world and the sins of humanity. In each generation,

¹¹³ Granted, this statement is based on Brunner's own account of the situation. Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography," 14.

the church relies on sound theology in its campaign to highlight the enormity of human sin and the grandness of God's mercy. Much of Moltmann's appreciation for the church's role in creating a just society can be attributed to the influence of his theological teachers during his student days, and their sway over him may be seen in his writings throughout his career.¹¹⁴

In regard to Moltmann's teachers and early influences, the work of Ernst Wolf must be mentioned as another key component in Moltmann's desire to link theology to social critique, ethics, and praxis. Wolf greatly influenced Moltmann's development of political theology because Wolf insisted that the church be open to and influenced by the social-political realm in which it carries out its mission. Moltmann builds into his theology definite parameters for the practice and implementation of theological beliefs, and he has devoted much thought to the necessity for political theology. Moltmann's appreciation of both the cross and the resurrection inspires him to connect human suffering with political action aimed at eliminating the injustices that cause suffering. His strong considerations for praxis lead him to advocate for human rights in many places within his writings. His doctrine of creation feeds his understanding that human beings have been created in God's image, and that therefore all people possess aspects of dignity and honor that must not be trampled on by powerful people or institutions in the world. Praxis has an eschatological edge as well in that human rights lead to people living as God intended them to be -- in freedom and with dignity.

¹¹⁴ The best examination of the influences upon Moltmann's thought is by Meeks, *Origins of the Theology of Hope* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974).

In the work of Arnold van Ruler and J. C. Hoekendijk, Moltmann found an expression of the linkage between eschatology and mission.¹¹⁵ Speaking of van Ruler, Moltmann says: "Through him I became acquainted with eschatology (a field lying fallow), with the missionary initiative of Christianity, and, not least, with the joys of theological imagination."¹¹⁶ From this school of theology, Moltmann developed his theology of mission as a function of the church. Moltmann's overall theological project of eschatological hope gains its direction in the process of promise-commission-mission that comes to the church as it learns its identity and purpose.¹¹⁷ Established by God's promises and commissioned by Christ, the church fulfills its role of mission to the world in the proclamation, participation, and spreading of the Kingdom of God's peaceful reign. Moltmann relied on this insight from Hoekendijk in ecclesiology to move his own theology beyond Barth's "church dogmatics" to a position of "missionary dogmatics." What this means is that theology's true objective is not to serve the church in its own struggles of belief against heresy. Rather, theology's purpose is to serve the mission of the church in the world as it proclaims God's kingdom. In this way, theology is intimately connected to the struggles of all peoples in the arena of contemporary history. Through Hoekendijk, Moltmann came to believe that

theology involves not only an internal struggle over doctrine but also an external contest over truth in the world. In view of the universal horizon of the future which is opened up in the action of the apostolate, the church finds possible a new cooperation with social and political movements of liberation and humanization in society.... Just as God's battle with and for the world is waged through the church's mission to the world, theology cannot surrender its solidarity with its contemporaries' struggle with reality nor can it forsake its inevitable

¹¹⁵ For more on the intricacies of recent Dutch theology, see "Dutch Theology: Focus on A. A. Van Ruler," in *Reformed Review* 26 (1973): 67-147; see also Hendrikus Berkhof, "Moltmann Zwischen Zwei Niederländern," in *Gottes Zukunft -- Zukunft der Welt* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1986), 469-480.

¹¹⁶ Moltmann, "Politics and the Practice of Hope," in *Christian Century* 87 (1970): 289.

¹¹⁷ Meeks, *Origins of the Theology of Hope*, 26.

conflict with their views of reality. The real task of theology must therefore be sought in the historical and world horizons of Christian thought and action.¹¹⁸

Theology serves as the theoretical basis of the church's mission to the world, and theology shifts the church's emphasis from *orthodoxy* to *orthopraxis*. Theology sets its sights on God's future transformation of all things in the Kingdom, and theology then becomes part of that practical transformation as well. Any student of Moltmann will quickly recognize the major place of ethical praxis in his work and his theology's insistence on social transformation.

The Continuum of Their Work

Macintosh's stature and place in twentieth century Reformed theology make him a worthy subject for examination on the development of the eschatological subjects of time and eternity. In some ways, his work on time and eternity is a rough diamond because it is not as fully developed as that of his successors; it is nonetheless a jewel of early twentieth century theology. His wide-ranging command of nineteenth century European theology makes him an important link between that century's most important thought and that of the twentieth century. He has been acknowledged by subsequent theologians as playing a significant role in shaping British theology and serving as a precursor to mid-twentieth century theology, of which Brunner was a leading figure.

Brunner's career extended for over forty years in length, and several of his works pulsate with eschatological themes. While he treats the subjects of time and eternity in other works, his 1954 book entitled *Eternal Hope* is solely dedicated to

¹¹⁸ Meeks, *Origins of the Theology of Hope*, 29.

enumerating a systematic approach to these topics within an eschatological framework. Volume three of his *Dogmatics* also covers an extensive analysis of eschatology. Brunner's first major work, *The Mediator*, expresses many christological views that he would change over time, but the undercurrent of eschatology remains strong in his christology. It is in his massive work on theological anthropology, *Man in Revolt*, that one finds eschatological definitions of the human condition before an eternal and righteous God, and this work, among others, demonstrates how eschatological emphases affect other areas of doctrine. Given his place in the middle one-third of the twentieth century and his influence within Reformed theology, I have chosen Brunner as the second subject of this project because he makes important contributions to the understanding of the relationship between time and eternity.

Moltmann serves as the representative of the twentieth century's close because he analyzes time and eternity throughout his writings. His views on history, the promise of the eschatological future, and christology all contain the theme of the time/eternity dialectic. For Moltmann, faith recognizes in Christ the temporal beginning of the eternal kingdom of God and the accompanying hope that is given toward the future. For Moltmann, the meaning of human life hinges on God's promises to renew life and creation, and this promise engenders hope in the present before the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises. As we have seen in the work of others, one of the top priorities of eschatology is to avoid the Marxist criticism that religion is the opiate of the masses and that Christian hope for the future advocates a laxity toward the evils of this present world. Moltmann insists that eschatology is meaningless if the faith of the church does not lead to mission, which must always point forward in hope to the kingdom of God.

Now the work of critical analysis begins as we see how each theologian addresses what Schwöbel highlights in his essay on the century of eschatology. As he points out, many ramifications for theology emerge from the ongoing emphasis placed on the relation between time and eternity. There is a continuity that runs throughout the work of Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann as each theologian continues and develops certain themes from previous generations, and there are important changes in theological perspectives made as the century of eschatology moves forward.

Chapter Two

Redefining Time: The Present

In the introductory chapter, I stated my agreement with the conclusion that reality is dynamic and that a tensed view of time is correct. I also affirmed my preference for the view that time is defined and understood best through the tensed predicates of past, present, and future. Now I will analyze specific points of doctrine that, in my opinion, are best described by assigning them to one of these three temporal categories. Turning to the categories of tense, I start with the present mainly because it is given primacy over the past and future in a tensed view of time. The present is the crucial “time-bridge” linking the past and future. Since reality is dynamic, what does this lead us to affirm about God’s “present” in relation to creation? In this chapter I shall begin by looking at the nature of God’s eternity, which I categorize as present on account of the concept of simultaneity. Simultaneity has been part of the discussion of God’s eternity since the Patristic period.¹ God’s simultaneously present life in relation to temporal events is addressed in the theology of Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann as each one differs from the classical understanding of God’s timeless simultaneity. I will attempt to ascertain in their work if describing God as eternal means that God’s life is dynamic, static, or some combination of both, and I will do so by focusing on the descriptions of God’s eternity in the work of these three theologians.

Also included in the present chapter is an analysis of the ways in which human beings experience time. Like all creatures, we are subject to the irreversible movement of time from the future into the present and into the past. This flow of

¹ For an intriguing comparison of the concept of simultaneity in the history of theology and literature, see Paul S. Fiddes, *The Promised End: Eschatology in Theology and Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd, 2000), 110-147.

time, which we measure by different units, is as irreversible as the aging process into which human beings are born, live, grow older, and die. In addition to this linear experience of time, human beings possess an ability to transcend the linear flow of dynamic time. The human experience of time includes a type of simultaneity by which the linearity is suspended through memory and anticipation, thereby making the past and future contingently present. I will consider how each theologian describes our experience of time as creatures who share, in a limited way, in the eternity of God.

Finally, I will follow their guidance that all doctrine be interpreted christologically by looking at the crucifixion of Jesus as an eschatological event. This event is categorized as present because even with the goodness and enjoyment of human life, which cannot be denied, life in the present includes the experiences of suffering and sin and eventually ends in death, and Christian theology has always drawn a connection between sin and death. For Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann the cross represents God's experience of human suffering in its depths, while also revealing the eternal love of God and the divine will to redeem humanity from sin. Jesus' death on the cross is God's willingness to identify completely with the despair of human life.

The Eternity of God

The long history of Christian thought regarding God's eternity primarily views God as being above, beyond, and outside the passage of time -- as transcendently *timeless* -- and measurements of time cannot be applied to God. Influenced as he was by Platonism, Origen's Alexandrian theology offers the first glimpse of divine

timelessness.² God is beyond all time, and “the statements we make about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit must be understood as transcending all time and ages and all eternity.”³ It was Augustine who would take up the relation of eternity and time in a comprehensive, systematic way that would set the tone for Medieval theology. For Augustine, God is the creator of time, and God necessarily exists timelessly and changelessly apart from creation, of which temporality is an inherent feature. It is the phenomenon of change upon which Augustine based his view of eternity as timelessness, and his was the opinion that would endure for centuries: “The distinguishing mark between time and eternity is that the former does not exist without some movement and change, while in the latter there is no change at all.”⁴ Augustine introduces here the theme of God’s immutability as the ground upon which eternity is defined as distinct from all temporal processes which involve change, becoming, and decay. Thus, for Augustine and most subsequent theology, God’s immutability is the basis for God’s eternity, and a timeless God exists all at once in a simultaneous present:

In you it is not one thing to be and another to live: the supreme degree of being and the supreme degree of life are one and the same thing. You are being in a supreme degree and are immutable. In you the present day has no ending, and yet in you it has its end: "all these things have their being in you" (Romans 11:36). They would have no way of passing away unless you set a limit to them. Because "your years do not fail" (Psalm 102:27), your years are one Today.⁵

² Origen was steeped in the thought of Parmenides (ca. 510-540 BC), which dominated ancient Greek concepts of eternity. See Parmenides, *Parmenides of Elea: Fragments*, trans. David Gallop (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984); see also the work of Origen’s contemporary Plotinus, *Enneads III*, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).

³ Origen, *On First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1973), 4.4.1.

⁴ Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: Modern Library, 1950), 11.6.

⁵ Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. William Watts (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 8. “It follows that he does not will first one thing and then another, but that he will all that he will simultaneously, in one act, and eternity.” Augustine, *Confessions*, 11.15.

Since time involves change and God is incapable of changing, it follows for Augustine that God lives in a single “today,” a timeless, simultaneous moment which has no temporal extension into the past or future.

Augustine’s thought on God’s simultaneously-lived “present” moment was further developed by Boethius, who gave Medieval theology its definition of God’s timeless eternity. As he worked out his views on the nature of divine foreknowledge, Boethius offered his famous definition of eternity which would stand unaltered for centuries:

It is the common judgment, then, of all creatures that live by reason that God is eternal. So let us consider the nature of eternity, for this will make clear to us both the nature of God and his manner of knowing. Eternity, then, is the complete, simultaneous and perfect possession of everlasting life; this will be clear from a comparison with creatures that exist in time...Whatever includes and possesses the whole fullness of interminable life at once and is such that nothing future is absent from it and nothing past has flowed away, this is rightly judged to be eternal.⁶

God is the perfect being in that God’s life and God’s knowledge lack nothing, and the transience of time, which renders the past as gone, is not a factor within the omniscience of God. God cannot “lose” the past or be ignorant of the future. All events exist in an eternal “now”, meaning that past and future are known simultaneously with the present with no distinguishing features between them for God. Otherwise, God would know temporal events in a series and thereby exist temporally as well.

Since God does not experience the distinctions of past, present, and future, such tensed terms, while vital for the human experience of time, are inapplicable to God. God possesses “everlasting” life, the “whole fullness of interminable life,” and temporal predicates do not apply to a life with no temporal extension into the past or

⁶ Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. V. E. Watts (Harmondsworth, U. K.: Penguin, 1969), 5.6.

the future. God's present is not like the human present, which is forever in flux as one moment passes away before the next: "He is ever, because 'ever' is with him a term of present time, and there is this great difference between the present of our affairs, which is now, and the divine present: our 'now' connotes changing time and sempiternity; but God's 'now,' abiding, unmoved, and immovable, connotes eternity."⁷ God's "now" is not sempiternal, meaning endlessly enduring through time. Again, for Boethius, God's immutability is the basis for timeless eternity, for if God were to experience change as everything created does, God would be temporal.

Another model of divine timelessness is found in the subsequent thought of Anselm, who, like Boethius, asserts that God's life cannot be viewed in a series and thus divided into "parts." Essential in Anselm's approach is his view of God's *simplicity*, meaning that God is indivisible in his attributes, which include eternity.⁸ God exists as a whole everywhere to all times. Anything that exists at one time and then at another is made up of different parts, which Anselm believes cannot be said of God:

If this Nature were to exist as a whole distinctly and successfully at different times (as a man exists as a whole yesterday, today and tomorrow), then this Nature would be properly be said to have existed, to exist, and to be going to exist. Therefore, its lifetime -- which is nothing other than its eternity -- would not exist as a whole at once but would be extended by parts throughout the parts of time. Now, its eternity is nothing other than itself. Hence, the Supreme Being would be divided into parts according to the division of time.⁹

Again we see that God's unchangeableness is the defining concept for asserting that God exists in a timelessly eternal present.¹⁰ Because time is the measure of change, a changeless being must be timeless. Since God's perfect being is unified and simple.

⁷ Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, 4.2

⁸ Anselm, *Monologion*, 18, in *Anselm of Canterbury*, v. 2, trans. J. Hopkins and H. W. Richardson (London: SCM Press, 1974).

⁹ Anselm, *Monologion*, 21.

¹⁰ Anselm, *Monologion*, 24.

i.e. indivisible, God cannot develop in any way that would make God greater in the future than who God is the present.

We may conclude from this brief analysis that the classical view of God's eternity is one of timelessness, based on the immutability of a God who exists in the perfection of indivisible simplicity.¹¹ This view would be maintained by orthodox theologians through the Reformation period and into modernity, so that we can safely say that Calvin's statements of God's eternity do not differ greatly from those of Schleiermacher. Like those before him, Calvin sought to define God's eternity by appealing to God's immutability, as he writes in his commentary on Psalm 90 that "God is here contrasted with created beings, who, as all know, are subject to continual changes, so that there is nothing stable under heaven. As, in a particular manner, nothing is fuller of vicissitude than human life, that men may not judge of the nature of God by their own fleeting condition, he is here placed in a state of settled and undisturbed tranquility."¹² Schleiermacher makes a similar claim as he denies any temporal description of God: "We must therefore reject as inadequate all those explanations which abrogate for God only the limits of time and not time itself, and would form eternity from time by removal of limits, while in fact these are opposite."¹³ It is this classical, almost monolithic view of God's eternity as timelessness, based on God's immutability, that undergoes serious challenge and

¹¹ Aquinas similarly developed his perception of God's timelessness out of the principle of God's simplicity, and specifically cites Boethius as the source of his own definition of eternity. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, tr. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947-1948), 1.10.1; 1.14.9; 1.14.5.

¹² John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, trans. James Anderson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), Psalm 90. In a way similar to Boethius, Calvin also addresses God's simultaneous present in regard to his foreknowledge: "When we attribute foreknowledge to God, we mean that all things have been and perpetually remain before his eyes, so that to his knowledge nothing is future or past, but all things are present; and present in such a manner, that he does not merely conceive of them from ideas formed in his mind, as things remembered by us appear to our minds, but he holds them and sees them as if actually placed before him." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 3. 20.2.

¹³ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, trans. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), 205.

refinement in the twentieth century, as evidenced by the work of our three representative theologians.

The trend of twentieth century theology is an increasingly visible move away from eternity as timelessness toward a doctrine of God that incorporates time and change as part of God's being in eternity. Rather than eliminate the tenses of past, present, and future in regard to God, our three theologians claim that God does, in fact, experience temporality while remaining transcendent over history. Thus, what we see is that eternity takes on two new aspects in the work of Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann.

First, eternity becomes a qualitative, descriptive term for a certain kind of life, the eternal life of God, and in this way it maintains continuity with the classical definition. This definition of eternity is altered by our theologians to include the understanding that eternity includes time and that God, therefore, incorporates time and its ongoing changes as part of his being in relation to creation. Second, we see that the classical interpretation of God's eternity relies on the tenseless theory of a static reality, while our three theologians offer views, to varying degrees, on the fluidity of dynamic time at the disposal of God. With a fresh approach to God's immutability and impassability¹⁴ as discerned through christological lenses, our theologians offer perspectives which include divine change within God's eternal being. This redefinition of time and eternity includes an examination of the ways in which God shares eternity with human beings and how God, through the Son, suffers the effects of the transience and finitude of temporal life.

¹⁴ I do not mean to imply that these two terms can be used interchangeably, as is often the case in the literature on God's timelessness. There is an important distinction, and our three theologians discuss both, while emphasizing the inadequacy of impassability for God as he reveals himself in the passion of Christ. For analysis of this distinction, see Richard E. Creel, *Divine Impassability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 82ff; Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity*, 74.

Time becomes the vehicle of a God who loves and suffers with his creation, and the connection between immutability, impassability and eternity is redefined along christological lines by the Son of God who sacrifices himself for humanity's sake. Our three theologians agree that God's eternity is much different from a static notion of divine timelessness. Moving away classical theology, they define eternity along the lines of a personal God who shares himself intimately with creation, and who, through the Son, experiences the pain and suffering that come with transience and death

With the traditional link between God's eternity and impassability, it is no wonder that questions and doubts about God's power would emerge in the twentieth century during traumatic events where God's relationship to history is called into question. Can God not intervene in history to prevent human destruction or tragedy because time cannot contain the eternal? Events such as the two World Wars caused much agonizing confusion regarding God's love and God's lordship in history, and the question of theodicy raged among those who agonized over the suffering of humanity. Mackintosh was well into his theological career by the time of the First World War, and with the reality of Europe's monumental destruction and death toll, Mackintosh found himself surrounded by questions regarding the eternal God's relationship to time.¹⁵

Mackintosh begins his assessment of God's relationship to time by challenging the concepts of immutability and impassability that are assumed in the classical definition of eternity that we have seen. He contends that God is personal, and to be personal is to be capable of growth and change. God must experience

¹⁵ Mackintosh asks the theodicy question in his own words: "Can God rightly be called infinite or omnipotent when such enormities as the recent conflict occur in His universe?...It has never ceased to be a question of how a perfect God can rule so imperfect a world." *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 39-40.

changes in his relations to humanity, and thus temporality becomes an element of God's relationships: "Is the relation of God to man of a static kind as immutable and intrinsic as the ratio holding between two given numbers, or is it interpretable in genuinely personal categories; susceptible, therefore, of change, growth, enrichment, consummation?"¹⁶ He answers this question in the affirmative by taking into account the numerous biblical examples of God's engagement of human beings at various times in history. Because God is the divine person who engages human persons through love, some form of change is elemental in this relationship, so that in relating with people throughout history, "God's love has changed in its manifestations within time."¹⁷ This alone does not necessarily imply that God's being is strictly temporal, but it opens up a fissure in the classical contradiction between immutability and temporality. Mackintosh will not let the starting point of defining God's eternity be the traditional concept of God's unchangeableness.

He develops this thought further by emphasizing the actions of personal God who is related to that upon which he acts. For God to act upon another being or upon history itself in any kind of providential way connotes the necessity of change in God's relation to creation. God's changes in relation to creation are real changes within God himself. "The living God, clearly, is a God possessed of Will, and expressing that will in action. He is not unrelated to the changes that occurring in the world; and if His relation to them be positive, we cannot speak of Him as sheerly unchangeable, since He must change in acting upon a developing universe if He is not to change in a deeper, sinister sense."¹⁸ It is not clear what Mackintosh means by this "deeper, sinister sense," but he appears to be referring to the classical doctrine of immutability. If God does not change in regard to that which he loves, then it is

¹⁶ Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 19.

¹⁷ Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 52.

¹⁸ Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 50.

possible that God is responsible for the evil of the world.¹⁹ If everything, including suffering, is statically fixed in the time-stream, then God would be either incapable or unwilling to respond to respond in love and mercy. For God not to be merciful would be contradictory to his character, inciting this “sinister” change in God. The personality of God is such that he responds to the cries of his people who suffer and is changed by his response as he delivers, guides, and loves his creatures.

The changes that God experiences in relation to creation are real changes that affect God’s life in such a way that God is capable of incorporating temporal change within his eternal life. Mackintosh is willing to admit that this view appears to be a contradiction because it is hard to describe how an omniscient God could be affected by changes that he can foresee. Nevertheless, Mackintosh asserts that temporal changes affect God’s being because God is not impassable toward that which he has created:

Relief from antinomy may be sought by declaring boldly that God has a career like any one of us – that, in short He is growing...To cut the Divine life away from all positive connexion with the stream of events would be to land ourselves in sheer theological agnosticism....Thus by a vital need of religion we seem driven to assert that God has new experiences. If for Him the temporal succession is other than a vain and transient drama, if He does more than eternally contemplate the succession as a whole, then His will projects into history, and somehow its issues are for Him a gain.²⁰

From this we ascertain that Mackintosh views God’s eternity as a dynamic process in which time’s passage is real and important. Reality is not static, and neither is the God who interacts with it. It follows then that God is not strictly timeless, but incorporates time into his eternal life.

¹⁹ Augustine states the same conundrum in his debate about free-will and divine foreknowledge. See Augustine, “On Free Will,” in *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, trans. J. H. Burgleigh, v. 6 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), II.2.4.

²⁰ Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 56-57.

Mackintosh strongly resists, however, the logic of Process Theology that God is instrumental in but not sovereign over the movement of history and its events. Although God experiences changes in relation to time, Mackintosh denies the extension of this thought to say that God is not yet able to exert supreme authority over all creation.²¹ An element of Process thought is the belief that God is so connected to creation that God cannot be transcendent over the events of time and history. Rather than defining God as the Creator of the world "out of nothing," Whitehead views God as the shaper and organizer of a world process by which God is attempting to bring his kingdom to reality as part of the outworking of his divine life. This belief leads Whitehead to say that "since God is actual, He must include in himself a synthesis of the total universe. There is, therefore, in God's nature the aspect of the realm of forms as qualified by the world, and the aspect of the world as qualified by the forms."²² This divine life includes creation, and God moves the world through the power of love and divine empathy.²³ God is not, in contrast to Mackintosh's view, a sovereign God who intervenes in history to determine its outcome.²⁴

While Process thinkers are reacting against classical notions of divine impassability, they do so by affirming a form of naturalism that envisions God as part of the creative process within the world.²⁵ This, in turn, implies that God's being in eternity is contingent upon the temporal process. God is incapable of directing the course of creation in any sense because such direction necessarily implies a Lordship over history. The idea that God is somehow limited within the immanent functioning

²¹ Donald G. Bloesch helpfully points out the differences between Reformed and Process approaches to sovereignty in his "Process Theology and Reformed Theology," in *Process Theology*, ed. Ronald H. Nash (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 1987), 35-56.

²² A. N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 93.

²³ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, ed. David R. Griffin (New York: Free Press, 1929), 73.

²⁴ Whitehead, *Adventures in Ideas* (New York: Free Press, 1967), 121.

²⁵ See Bloesch, "Process Theology and Reformed Theology," 390.

processes of the world is therefore irreconcilable to God's transcendent Lordship over history.

Even though Mackintosh affirms that God changes through the experiences he has with creation, these changes do not mean that God is growing in his attributes, such as in his omnipotence or omniscience. God simply cannot be limited by the past or unknowing toward the future: "If to apply the conception of growth to God involves His subjection, on a par with men, to time's passage and duration, we shall have no choice but to attribute to Him, to select but one example, such an ignorance of the future as will wreck Christian faith in providence from end to end."²⁶ For Mackintosh, there is an inseparable connection between God act of creating, including the creation of time, and God's Lordship, which is omnipotent over that which he has created. The idea of God's growth in omnipotence destroys the eschatological goal toward which God draws creation because there may be unknown entities stronger than or wiser than God that can prevent the goal from being achieved:

To believe that the world is under no supreme control, that there are events in the future which God does not know and cannot rule and overrule, is to cut faith at the root. The notion of such a God, 'of limited liability' if we may put it so, reduces life to anarchy, and when taken seriously cannot but alter gravely the relations of men to the Father.²⁷

If God is not sovereign in his freedom over time, then God and all creation will forever remain in flux, and God may lack the necessary ability to bring creation to its consummation. If God were to lack sovereign wisdom and power, then we would have to claim that God is also incomplete in holiness and love, so that God is more

²⁶ Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 51. God is not finitely limited by historical events because "to God the course of the world is not external fate by which He is confronted, and with which He too must somehow come to terms; its multiplicity and mutation, with the reality of progress and movement these imply, constitute a sphere for creative action that weaves into the cosmic texture this dominating pattern of redemptive love. History then is such that salvation may come by way of it." Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 16.

²⁷ Mackintosh, *The Christian Apprehension of God* (London: SCM Press, 1929), 229-230.

loving and holier today than a few years ago. While it is true to say that the manifestations of God's love have changed over time, it is not conceivable that these manifestations were a result of God's increasing wisdom and love in regard to creation. This would make the eternal God subject to time, rather than time's subjection to the Lordship of God.

Thus, to sum up Mackintosh's understanding of God's eternity, we see that Mackintosh defines eternity in relation to God's sovereignty, yet he makes an important qualification on the omnipotence of God. He argues that God's providential guiding and directing of history must be understood in relation to God's redemptive *purposes* and not God's raw *power* as such.²⁸ God guides history toward a goal, and the Christian understanding of eternal sovereignty never depicts raw power as such but *redemptive* power exercised through the choices of God. God does not exercise sovereign power for the sake of power alone, but God does exercise power graciously for the purpose of bringing redemption. Mackintosh contends that the intent of God's sovereign will is a redemptive love that is exercised on behalf of others, namely human beings. At issue is the question of human freedom and, in a larger sense, the freedom of creation as a separate entity from God.

When we see that Mackintosh's doctrine of God's eternity allows for some elements of temporal change while denying progress and growth to God's character and attributes, we may say that Mackintosh arrives at a conclusion similar to Alan Padgett's view of God's "relative timelessness."²⁹ Padgett argues that God is timeless in the sense that God is not measured by time or subject to the negative aspects of temporal loss or transience. God does transcend created time, but God also enters into relationships with temporal creatures and is affected by their lives. Padgett further

²⁸ See Barth's similar analysis in *Church Dogmatics*, II/1, 524.

²⁹ Padgett, *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time*, 120-130.

argues that the ancient view of God's timelessness is true only if the tenseless view of reality is true. God's personal interaction in sustaining creation, however, implies that God changes in relation to creation and that therefore God's life is tensed and dynamic: "God's choice, then, to live a certain kind of life – to be dynamic, active, changing – is the ground of the temporality of the universe."³⁰ What this means for Padgett is that as the creator of time, God is also the Lord of time, and God "has a design or a plan which he is enacting in history." Mackintosh would agree wholeheartedly with this understanding of God's plan,³¹ but even more than that, Mackintosh would find much kinship with Padgett in their mutual understanding that while God's dynamic life involves change, God's eternal attributes are timelessly unchanging.

Brunner's doctrine of eternity offers a critique similar to Mackintosh's regarding the traditional account of God's timelessness, and Brunner dismisses the classical definition as unrepresentative of the God revealed in scripture. Like his ancient and medieval predecessors, Brunner begins his understanding of eternity with the immutability of God. The living God "is the absolutely living One to whom is proper nothing of transience, the existence in death, which cleaves to all temporality. God's being is changelessness and immortality."³² Brunner's language is also reflective of Boethius when he describes the unity of the past and future in the simultaneous present of God: "God embraces past and future in an unqualified sense, time does not flow away from Him, He controls it; He has therefore absolute *durée réelle*, real undivided, unconquered, indissoluble fullness of life in the present. The divine moment thus holds together past and future in an indivisible unity."³³ This

³⁰ Padgett, *God, Eternity, and the Nature of Time*, 123.

³¹ A collection of Mackintosh's sermons is entitled *Life on God's Plan*.

³² Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 55.

³³ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 55.

may initially lead one to believe that Brunner will strictly follow the classical line of God's timeless eternity, but this is not the case as Brunner continues to delve into the meaning of God's eternity's and his relation to time.

Citing the origins of timelessness in Platonism, Brunner sees that the idea of divine timelessness as developed by classical theologians is concerned with the static, timeless truth of Ideas, one of which is God's negative relation to temporality.³⁴ Brunner contends that God's eternity must be defined in the opposite way: as it positively relates to time. God is positively related to time as its creator and Lord, so "the relation of God to Time and temporal development is not negative but positive. God is infinitely 'interested' in the time-process....God takes part in temporal happenings, indeed He even involves Himself in the temporal; He reveals Himself in historical time."³⁵ Brunner then goes on to declare that God must be understood as changeable in his dealings with humans and creation because God reacts to the changes in people's lives, and this reaction precipitates a change in God.

God is moved by what happens on earth and to his creatures, and God is attuned to and concerned by changes in the world. God hears the prayers of his people, a fact which demonstrates God's deep interest in their lives. What affect them affects the God, who is their maker and sustainer: "In so far as He hears prayer, in so far as "He repents Himself", in so far as He is concerned about man, God is not the Unchangeable. He is not Unchangeable because, and in so far as, He has created Time, and takes part in temporal happenings."³⁶ In this sense, Brunner, too, presents

³⁴ For Plato, eternity is an ideal state, of which time is a faint copy. See Plato, *Timaeus* 37d, in Plato, *The Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishers, 1997), 1241. "This 'Eternity' (of Platonic philosophy) is the negation of Time, as the Absolute is the negation of the finite. It makes Time an illusion, which has no share in timeless truth. Time must be depreciated, denied, as the creaturely must be depreciated and denied. The eternal godhead of Plato has no relation – least a merely negative one – to all that 'is becoming' within Time." Brunner, *Dogmatics: The Christian Doctrine of God*, v. 1, trans. Olive Wyon (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949), 266.

³⁵ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 1, 268.

³⁶ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 1, 269.

God's eternity as a dynamic state which allows for change and becoming in relation to creation, while God also maintains a Lordship over time as its sovereign creator. Based on this positive affectation between time and God, Brunner develops the idea that God's eternity is not timelessness because God includes time in his being.³⁷ Dynamic time is part of God's life, and time is positively fulfilled in by presence of God: "God includes and comprehends Time within His Presence; He does not eliminate it, but He fulfils it. God's Being is not timeless; but it is full of time, fulfilling time; all that is temporal is present in Him in the same way, or, to put it more correctly: He is present in the Temporal as a whole as He wills."³⁸ Thus, Brunner concludes that it is not inconsistent to claim that God exists in a simultaneous present because time is a constituent of God's life and experiences.

Like Mackintosh, Brunner does not allow God's temporal changeableness to be further developed into a theory of God's dependence upon time in the outworking of his will for creation. Even though God's life includes dynamic time, God's immanent sharing of time with creation does not mean that God is bound by the process of creation's continuance within time and space. Brunner is opposed to any hint of God's growing, along with the world, in love, holiness, and especially in sovereignty:

Were God Himself One who is 'becoming' then everything would founder in the morass of relativism. We can measure nothing by changing standards; changeable norms are no norms at all; a God who is constantly changing is not a God whom we can worship... The Kingdom of God comes; and God is infinitely concerned about its Coming. But He Himself stands high above the sphere of becoming; for Time is His creation. God stands above Time because He is its

³⁷ Barth arrives at a similar conclusion in presentation of the Eternal Word of God as spoken by God: "Here the dilemma does not arise, between a present that disappears midway between the past and future, and a past and future that dissolve for their part into a present. Here there is a genuine present...The Word of God is. It is never 'not yet' nor 'no longer'...The Word spoken from eternity raises the time into which it is uttered (without dissolving it as time), up into His own eternity, as now His own time." Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I/2, 52.

³⁸ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 1, 270.

Creator and Lord. The God who creates Time, who makes a beginning, who 'allows' time, and who will one day say: 'Now it is ended!' -- this God is not Himself involved in the Time-process.³⁹

Brunner mires himself down in contradiction with this statement in that, on the one hand, he affirms God's positive relation to time, yet on the other hand he denies God's involvement in the time-process. It is of critical importance to note, however, that Brunner is addressing here the sovereignty of God over time versus the idea of God's development within time. God's immanence within time does not dictate that God be subject to time and dependent upon the temporal process.⁴⁰ God's eternity, then, is equivalent to God's Lordship over time. Without being the Lord of time, God would be unable to foresee and overcome the obstacles to redemption that humanity and evil continually use to thwart God's purposes. God also would be subject to the transience which accompanies the progression of time, including evil.

The main way in which Brunner addresses the classical definition's linkage of God's eternity and impassability is to delve into the meaning of God's love as revealed in history and how this love affects temporal creatures. Brunner seeks to distinguish his concept of God's eternal simultaneity by making a connection between the "present" of God and God's never-ending love. God reveals himself to be self-giving love, and this love has always existed between the Father and the Son in a "dialogue of love in eternity." In this way, he sees God's eternal present as "not the silence of sheer self-existence, but the conversation between the Father and the Son which has no beginning and no ending."⁴¹ Therefore, God's always present, eternal

³⁹ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 1, 269.

⁴⁰ Macquarrie states the difficulty of relating God's transcendence over history to God's immanence within it by saying: "There is no doubt a sense in which God transcends history, yet history is also the region or medium in which he realizes his purposes, and surely this is important to him and makes some difference to him. God is not simply above history, unaffected and unchanged by it, nor is he simply within history as a kind of evolving God in a way that some empiricists have visualized him. He is both above and within, however difficult it may be for us to conceive this." John Macquarrie, *Thinking About God* (London: SCM Press, 1975), 113.

⁴¹ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 56.

life is lived in loving relationships, and God bestows this “presence” of love upon human beings.⁴² To live in eternity is to live in the fullness of love, and the love of God is always present within God's eternal, Trinitarian being. Through the Holy Spirit, our present experience of God's love is a reflection of God's eternal present. God wills to share this loving eternal present with temporal creatures, so that God's presence is love, which is given to human beings in time -- in the present. God's present presence of love is the experience of the Christian who lives in a relationship of faith and trust with God.

Brunner's thought on God's eternal temporality finds interesting parallels in a proposal by Craig in which he proposes a unique angle on a change in God's life -- from being timeless to being temporal. Brunner initially contends that God is timeless in his transcendence and sovereignty over time, but then he quickly describes the ways in which God is personally affected by the events which occur within time. God personally encounters human beings and is personally affected by their lives and circumstances. In a similar vein, Craig offers a novel, and in his own words “curious,” account of how God takes on temporality by being actively creative within the world.⁴³ Craig argues that if God is truly related to the temporal world in a personal way, then God must possess temporality as part of his own being. A loving God cannot remain untouched by the temporal world he has created, and therefore God has a history because God has a relationship with the temporal world that he has made. This fact reminds us of Brunner's assertions regarding the acute importance of God's personal being in relation to other personal beings. It is through this personal relationship that God has a history with temporal creatures he has made.

⁴² See the translator's note in *Eternal Hope*, p. 58, for Brunner's stylistic play on the words *Gegenwart* and *Gegenwärtigkeit* to describe God's presence in love in the present.

⁴³ William Lane Craig, "Timelessness and Omnitemporality," in *God and Time: Four Views*, ed. Gregory Ganssle (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2001), 140-153; see also *Craig, God, Time, and Eternity*, 270-280.

Craig advances from this view of God's temporality to propose that God's act of creating time serves as the boundary between God's timelessness and God's temporality. The act of creating, out of nothing, a universe that God loves brings about a change in God's own being – from tenseless to tensed, from timeless to temporal:

It seems to me, therefore, that it is not only coherent but also plausible that God existing changelessly alone without creation is timeless and that he enters time at the moment of creation in virtue of his real relation to the temporal universe. The image of God existing idly before creation is just that: a figment of the imagination. Given that time began to exist, the most plausible view of God's relationship to time is that he is timeless without creation and temporal subsequent to creation.⁴⁴

This line of reasoning resonates with Brunner's assumptions of the empathetic relationship God has with creation, and in particular, with humanity. For God to be aware of events in temporality, God must also possess a sense of time and its correlation to events. The history of Israel and the church is a relationship with God that changes over time, and divine timelessness would negate the interaction of the personal God with the world.⁴⁵

Moltmann's descriptions of the eternity of God are similar to the preceding theologians in some regards, but he incorporates into his views several different aspects to emphasize the dynamic nature of God's eternal life. Echoing the thought of his predecessors, Moltmann agrees that we cannot turn to the classical notions of immutability and impassability as the starting point to define God's eternity. Moltmann judges that when it comes to describing eternity, the classical language of God's superlative characteristics is inadequate when compared with the revelation of God in history through Jesus Christ. The classical line starts with all of the

⁴⁴ Craig, Craig, "Timelessness and Omnitemporality," 160.

⁴⁵ Craig, "Timelessness and Omnitemporality," 171. For critiques of Craig's view, see the responses to his essay in *God and Time*, 161-174.

superlative attributes that distinguish God from humanity -- i.e. impassibility, omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence – and then moved toward understanding Christ's life and mission from within the classical definition of God.

Moltmann, in contrast, believes that one must start first with the revelation of God in Christ, and in particular his cross, and then arrive at the definition of God's eternal attributes: "If, in the manner of Greek philosophy, we ask what certain characteristics are 'appropriate' to the deity, then we have to exclude difference, diversity, movement and suffering from the divine nature...But if we turn instead to the theological proclamation of the Christian tradition, we find at its very center the history of Christ's passion."⁴⁶ In the negation of what it means to be human, God is defined as omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. Moltmann begins, conversely, from the standpoint of who God is as revealed by the Son incarnate in Jesus, and he works back from the revelation of Jesus to speak of God's being in eternity. He concludes, therefore, that immutability and impassability are insufficient for describing who God is in eternity.

To be eternal, according to Moltmann, is to possess God's unlimited eternal ability to suffer with and for others. Rather than being dispassionate, God is, quite to the contrary, deeply affected by events and circumstances within creation. We know this primarily from the witness of Jesus Christ, and Jesus is in time what God is in eternity. Moltmann refuses to begin discussions of God from the speculative starting point of God's absolute, eternal nature because Christian theology should begin with the temporal person of Christ, who embodies God's eternal passion for humanity. In this rationale there is a similarity between Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann as both draw attention to the cross as the ultimate revelation of eternal love. For both

⁴⁶ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 21.

there is no greater revelation of the pathos of God than the cross of Christ, and the cross must be the starting point for understanding God's eternal being.⁴⁷ What the Son does and who the Son is in time, God is the same in eternity.

Moltmann follows Brunner in making a connection between God's eternity and God's love so that eternity and love are descriptive terms of God's inner-Trinitarian life, and therefore eternity cannot simply be the negation of temporality. Since the loving eternity and eternal love of the Triune God are revealed by the Son in the temporal life of Christ, it follows that temporality is experienced by God.⁴⁸ God's immanent love in time is no different from God's transcendent love in eternity, and the eternal nature of God's love is revealed in the love that Christ exhibited in the temporal sphere:

If we follow through the idea that the historical passion of Christ reveals the eternal passion of God, then the self-sacrifice of love is God's eternal nature... God is love; love makes a person capable of suffering; and love's capacity for suffering is fulfilled in the self-giving and the self-sacrifice of the lover. Self-sacrifice is God's very nature and essence....God sacrifices himself in eternity, and his whole nature is embodied in this act. He is the lover, the beloved, and the love itself.⁴⁹

Working first from Christ's revelation of God's suffering pathos allows us to say what God's eternal being is like. God's suffering love and eternity are bound together, and these constitute a life that is unique to God. Steen believes that Moltmann affirms a contradiction within the Trinitarian Godhead at this point in that Moltmann too severely separates the relationship between the Father and the Son in Moltmann's theology of the cross.⁵⁰ The Father is opposed to the Son in the Son's role as

⁴⁷ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 31.

⁴⁸ Barth similarly works out his views on God's incorporation of time in his analysis of the trinitarian life of God, so that he can speak of "before" and "after" within God's life. See Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II/1, 615.

⁴⁹ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 32.

⁵⁰ M. Steen, "Jurgen Moltmann's Critical Reception of Barth's Theopaschitism," in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, v. 4, Dec. 1991, 287.

humanity's representative before God. The Father and the Son are separated as the Father delivers the Son up to god forsakenness. Moltmann's response is based on his belief that although they are separated by the god-forsakenness in the cross, they are united in love by the Spirit. The Spirit serves as the inner-Trinitarian link as the Son and Father suffer separation on the cross. The Son's willingness to suffer for others in obedience to the Father, yet to be united in love through the Spirit, is indicative of the eternal, inter-Trinitarian relationship. In this sense Moltmann can say that God sacrifices himself in eternity. To be eternal, therefore, is to be unlimited in ability to suffer on another's behalf, and just as Christ does this within history, so also does God do it in eternity.

Moltmann wants to maintain God's sovereignty over time as its creator and Lord in ways that affirm God's transcendence: "God must undoubtedly be thought of as 'above the times'. We express this with the idea of his eternity."⁵¹ However, Moltmann's writings on the nature of eternity see this transcendence as inclusive, not exclusive, of time. In *The Coming of God*, Moltmann makes the case for his future-oriented eschatology by emphasizing the scriptural anticipation of God's coming to and eventual arrival in the world. The temporal past and present are open to the future of God's coming, and the future of God, therefore, is the source of the future of time. Temporality will be filled with the glory of the coming and so that "what comes is eternal life and eternal time."⁵² Moltmann denies, therefore, a static view of God's eternity as a timeless simultaneity because eternity is the "power of his future over every historical time." With the coming of God, temporality, as oriented toward God's future, ends "and eternal time begins." This concept of eternal time as it relates

⁵¹ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 297.

⁵² Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 23.

to God's "absolute eternity" requires closer examination to understand what Moltmann means by this term.

When he describes the relation between eternity and time, the term that Moltmann repeats in his exposition of God's being is that of "absolute eternity," which is inclusive of time in several ways. Despite his objections to the notion of time and history as an "eternal present" to God,⁵³ the absolute eternity of God is clearly a type of simultaneity in which all times -- past, present, and future -- are "now" for God. Human beings experience simultaneity, a "relative eternity," when the mind makes the past present through memory and makes the future present through expectation, thus making simultaneous that which occurs at different times. Moltmann takes this concept a step further in applying it to God: "This (human) simultaneity, however fragmentary in kind, of past and future in the present is a relative eternity, for simultaneity is one of the attributes of eternity. Universal simultaneity would be absolute eternity as 'the fullness of time'."⁵⁴ God possesses absolute eternity because he possesses this "fullness," a fullness of time which is equivalent to the fullness of life.⁵⁵

Time itself is transformed by God's coming to it to bring it the qualities of this fullness, and this transformation of time by God endows it with a "relative eternity" that participates in God's absolute eternity. Moltmann terms this relative eternity as *aeonic eternity*, which is cyclical and reversible, as opposed to the irreversible experience of linear time⁵⁶:

Eternity in time, finally, is nothing other than the other side of the present....Present always makes-present past and future. Present thus

⁵³ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 281.

⁵⁴ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 287.

⁵⁵ Here we see Moltmann's agreement with Boethius' terminology: "The whole, simultaneous and complete possession and enjoyment of life is the fullness of time in the fullness of the loved life." Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 291.

⁵⁶ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 331;

always makes-present eternity in time, since eternity is the simultaneity of past and future. 'As long as we can say today' eternity reaches into time. That is not the absolute eternity of the 'Wholly Other' God, but it is, surely, the aeonic eternity of the invisible world of heaven, which is bound up with the time of this visible world of the earth.⁵⁷

The coming of God transforms temporality into aeonic eternity, which, in turn, is dependent upon God's absolute eternity. In God's absolute eternity, time extends forwards and backwards in all times so that all times are always present to God.

Like Brunner, Moltmann defines eternal life along qualitative lines as the fullness of creative life. There is an important difference, however, between Brunner's opinion regarding the "eternal present" of God and Moltmann's view on the openness of the future. Whereas Brunner ascribed the eternal present to God's experience of all times simultaneously, Moltmann's desire is to leave the future open as a realm of possibility, meaning that all times are not immediately present to God. One of the emphases in the first chapter of *Theology of Hope* is Moltmann's separation from the dialectical notion of God's eternity confronting every moment in time. Instead of following this line, Moltmann draws a distinction between the present and the future of God. If to God all time is strictly present, then Moltmann believes this undercuts the notion of real process, growth, and change within history. Mackintosh was quick to affirm the reality of change within history, yet Moltmann claims that the classical concept of God's eternal present means that there is no room for promise and fulfillment if all times are simultaneous to God. For Moltmann, there must be an outstanding future for God, particularly the future of Jesus Christ. The future is yet to be determined by God, and that future is dependent upon the continual activity of Christ in the process of redemption. Viewing time as a process which contains the promise of the future means that

⁵⁷ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 290.

the word of God -- *Deus dixit* -- would not be the naked self-proof of the eternal present, but a promise which as such discloses and guarantees an outstanding future. Then the result of this revelation in promise would be a new perception of history's openness towards the future. Not all ages would have an equally immediate relation to God and an equal value in the light of eternity, but they would be perceived to be in a process determined by the promised eschaton.⁵⁸

Although the eschaton is a promise spoken over time, the fact that it is still in the future means that God himself still awaits the outcome of history, and as such, not all history is present to God. It is on account of the promise of God's future that Moltmann sees a need for distinguishing between present and future, a difference that is just as real for God as it is for humanity.

This is an important shift away from the thinking of Mackintosh and Brunner, who repel the notion of "growing God" whose knowledge of the future is subject to the passage of time. While Moltmann maintains that the future goal of creation is in the kingdom of God, he leaves room open for the development of God in relation to history. This is a central theme for Moltmann: that Christ, hence God, is "on the way" to his Lordship over all creation. Because the eschaton is yet to happen, there is development in God's Lordship over time, because time is part of creation. Whether or not Moltmann would claim that God is holier and more loving now than yesterday is questionable, and Moltmann seems to leave open the possibility of a God who grows in eternity as time passes on toward the consummation.

In sum, what we have seen within the work of Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann is a continual move away from the classical line of God's eternity as timelessness. This move has been accompanied by a shift in thinking regarding the capability of God to include time within his eternity. All three see change as instrumental in God's relationship with human beings, and it is disingenuous to claim

⁵⁸ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 58.

that God is not affected by the changes and events of the creatures he loves. Mackintosh and Brunner want to draw a line between God's mutability and God's omniscience to say that even in his perfect knowledge, God is personally affected by events even if he "knows" them before they happen. They similarly assert that God's mutability in response to creatures should not imply a limit on God's sovereignty, as if God lacks control over creation and is bound by its own laws and processes. Moltmann, however, affirms God's sovereignty over creation but proposes that God is limited in his knowledge of the future. Christ is on the way to his Lordship and full sovereignty, but he is not there yet. The future is open due to the promise spoken over it by God. While the outcome of God's kingdom is not in doubt for Moltmann, the events and means by which it is achieved are.

The Human Experience of Time

Given this complex connection between eternity and time in the life of God, what may be said about the ways in which human beings, as part of creation, experience time? People are similar to all living creatures in that their lives are transient, marked by change, growth, decay, and, eventually death. Yet human beings are also unique among creatures through their special relationship with God, and this relationship allows them to transcend time, if only in a limited way. Each of our three theologians acknowledges that human beings experience time in ways much different from the rest of creation. Humanity possesses the distinction from other creatures of being both bound by the temporal process and able to see past it. We are limited by the transience of time, and human life is subject to temporal events beyond its control. Yet men and women also possess a way of rising above time to share in the eternity of

God, and God wills that human beings should not be limited by time. The life that humans live in relation to God means that we can overcome the strict boundaries of past, present, and future in our experiences.

From the outset it must be noted that Mackintosh's thought on the human experience of time is considerably less-developed compared to that of both Brunner and Moltmann. This fact is a sign of the significant transformation of the understanding of time within the twentieth century. Yet even so, we see in Mackintosh a fledgling understanding of human transcendence over time that would grow tremendously in the generations that follow him.

Mackintosh's limited rationale on the human experience of time revolves around his perception that the eternal love of God and historical events are woven together "by the unbreakable strands of living fiber." The strongest strand is that of Jesus Christ, to whom the believer is united in a relationship beyond time. Christ was an historical person, yet he is also the transcendent Lord, and Christ unites himself with Christians in such a way as to allow them to transcend time. The Christian looks back (in memory) to the historical events of Christ's life, and these past events reveal the living Christ as he joins himself to the believer through faith.

Mackintosh does not deal with humanity in general, but he does maintain that Christians possess an ability to transcend time through memory and hope based on their *mystical union* with God through Christ.⁵⁹ This mystical union does not imply the intermingling of divine and human "substances" in a pantheistic manner, but, instead, the union is between the *personalities*⁶⁰ of God and the Christian in a spiritual

⁵⁹ Mackintosh, "The Unio Mystica as a Theological Conception," in *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 99-120.

⁶⁰ "We have to put aside the category of 'substance' and construe the facts freshly in terms of personality. On the accepted principle of modern philosophy that there are degrees of reality, a personal union ought to be regarded as infinitely more real than a 'substantial' one." Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, 334.

way: “it is a spiritual union; a mutual appropriation and interpenetration of spirit by spirit.”⁶¹ The Christian’s personality is joined to that of Christ, so that temporal events in Christ’s life become the personal experience of the one united with him: “Our solidarity with Christ is such that in His death we also die; in His grave we are also buried; with the Risen Lord, and in Him, we too rise to newness of life.”⁶² The events in the life of Christ, real historical events, take on a larger spiritual significance for the Christian who remembers these events yet also experiences them in the present.

An interesting conception of the human experience of time develops out of this union with Christ because this union offers a commingling of past, present, and future within the Christian experience. Mackintosh does not use the term simultaneity, but he clearly sees that one’s relationship with the transcendent Lord changes one’s experience of time: “There is the ever recurrent form ‘in Christ,’ with its converse ‘Christ in you’; both to be found now and then almost within the limits of a single verse. How the words ‘in Christ’ stretch through all time! How they cover not the present merely, but eternity before and after!”⁶³ Mackintosh speaks of this union in ways that remind us of a dynamic conception of time, and this dynamism is continued in the eternal relationship between Christ and the Christian. The present experience of the Christian is such that she is united to the love of God in a way that “stretches” that experience to “before” the foundation of the world and “after” Christ’s parousia in glory. The Christian experiences a union with Christ that is both tensed and tenseless.

The fact that history is this dynamic arena means that there is no clear line of demarcation between past events and present experience in one’s relationship with

⁶¹ Mackintosh, “The Unio Mystica as a Theological Conception,” 104.

⁶² Mackintosh, “The Unio Mystica as a Theological Conception,” 104.

⁶³ Mackintosh, “The Unio Mystica as a Theological Conception,” 103.

Christ. It is the Christian's experience of God's love revealed in Christ that allows one to approach time in a transcendent way, seeing time as part of the larger whole of God's activity. God acts in, through, and by historical events to bring to fruition God's redemptive purposes for the world. Redemption through Christ envelops the Christian's life so that he may be included in something much larger than his own life: the kingdom of God. Through history, God's kingdom is coming to the world, and a redemptive purpose is being executed on a grand scale within historical reality. God's redemption has an eternal origin and an eternal goal, and the Christian experiences eternity by joining with God's eternal purposes. Therefore the Christian, along with all of history, is always on the move toward its final goal.

Memory plays an important role in Mackintosh's view of the human experience of time, and it is through the memory of Christ's life and work that one is transformed in the present. The contemporary Christian accepts the truth of past historical realities, not because the past is by itself capable of redeeming the present, but, instead, because the Christ of the past is still alive and at work in the present. The Christ who encountered people in ancient Galilee continues to encounter people today, and therefore past events attested to in scripture hold tremendous sway over the present. The Holy Spirit makes past events in history come alive and have meaning in the present. This appeal to pneumatology and time is important because the Holy Spirit enables us to believe that the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith are one and the same living, present person, made real to human experience through the Spirit of God. For Mackintosh, it is the Christian's relatedness to Christ through the Spirit that allows for a partial transcendence over time.

Brunner contributes to his understanding of the human experience of time by concentrating on the nature of the temporal boundaries which frame human life.

There is a visible link between Mackintosh and Brunner in their emphasis on the importance of personhood and that Christians are encountered by a personal God who invites them to attach themselves through faith to God's saving activity in the world. As we have seen, "personalism" is one of the dominant themes of Brunner's theology, and Brunner's personalistic approach has ramifications for his understanding of the human experience of time. Christian faith is extremely personal because it involves the Christian's act of trusting in the events in Christ's life, and Christians freely choose to live in response to him. Faith is willfully joining in the crucifixion and death of Christ, and this completely subjective decision for faith changes the direction of the history of one's life. In this act of faith, past events become part of the on-going livingness of history. A person's present is changed by the Christ event of the past.

It is the nature of something created to have a history, and each individual has his or her own unique, personal history, and this history continually shapes personality and experiences. In the ongoing development of one's personal history, people experience time in a tensed manner as it irreversibly flows from the future (not yet) toward the present (now) and into the past (no longer). This primal experience of the time factor greatly affects human emotions and perceptions because it reminds us of our transience and mortality as we realize that we have no control over time's passage. The past is gone and cannot be revisited, and the future always lies beyond our knowledge and control. Because time is irreversible, human transience infuses feelings of ambivalence toward the passage of time during a lifetime. The past causes regrets for mistakes and the future, because it is unknown, causes anxiety.

There is another way of experiencing time, however, which returns people to that which has already been and which offers humans a partial experience of the future, and it relates to the concept of simultaneity. The divisions between past,

present, and future are more fluid than solid, and one's life is in constant movement between events of the past, through memory, and the future, through anticipation. The past and future have tremendous significance for the present, and they exert enormous influence over people's decisions: the past and future provoke mixed feelings of pain and joy, anxiety and hope in the present.

Brunner incorporates into his theology the philosopher Bergson's notion of the *durée réelle*, which is a vastly different experience of time from the strictly linear passage of the future through the present and into the past.⁶⁴ Bergson describes the psychological dynamic within a person's life where "even the simplest psychic elements possess a personality and a life of their own, however superficial they may be; they are in a constant state of becoming, and the same feeling, by the mere fact of being repeated, is a new feeling."⁶⁵ Brunner employs this concept of *durée réelle*, to describe the "lived-time" or "time-as-experienced" of each person. According to our lived-time, the way in which we experience past, present, and future is much more complex than the mere chronological passage of tensed time.

To illustrate what he means, Brunner measures time according to the two ways in which humans experience it: as a *punctum mathematicum* and as *durée réelle*. The one-way flow of time from the future through the present into the past is experienced linearly as each moment is a unique point -- a *punctum mathematicum* -- in the movement of dynamic time. Linear time remains constant regardless of human activity and circumstances. Humanity measures the flow time according to units of *punctum mathematicum*, and this experience of time is commonly marked by the turning of the calendar to denote the passage of days, months, and years. We may

⁶⁴ Brunner relies especially on Bergson's *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (New York: Macmillan, 1910).

⁶⁵ Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, 200.

speak of time by dividing it into large units of epochs and ages and miniscule units of nano-seconds. Lived-time emerges out of the linear experience of time, but it is more than linear: it is the reflection upon and interpretation of events that occur during the passage of linear time. Consideration upon one's lived-time, the tenses of one's life, involves human transcendence over tense through memory and anticipation, and through such reflection, time extends away from the present in the directions of the past and future. In contrast to linear time, lived-time is a complex intermingling of past, present, and future so that both the past and future influence the present. It is in contemplation of the lived-time that people fathom the meaning, or meaninglessness, of their lives and their actions.

The life of every organism, human and non-human, shows the effect of lived-time in that past experiences have palpable effects on present life. Brunner invites us by analogy to imagine the life of a tree to discern the impact of its experiences in time. What is now a fully-grown tree was once only a seed, yet the seed contained the essence of what would become a tree. The knots and scars of a tree's early life are still visible in later years. The same principle of lived-time operates in a human life because the tiniest infant grows and matures into an adult, always carrying the scars and experiences accumulated over a lifetime. Who a person is now is intricately related to whom she was and what she experienced in the past, and yet in the present she is also distinct from herself in the past. The key to lived-time is that it is mind-dependent through one's capacity for memory and anticipation. In human life the mind functions to make formative past experiences continually present, and through memory one builds a bridge between the present and the past. In lived-time, memory suspends the time-stream by making a past experience readily available in the present. When one recalls past experiences of either joy or pain, happiness or sadness, the

sentiment caused by the past event affects the person in the present, and this sentiment influences one's present choices in anticipation of the future.

For Brunner this capacity for memory and anticipation is the major factor that distinguishes human beings from other creatures, and Brunner claims that the boundaries which exist between past, present, and future are largely diaphanous.⁶⁶ Because humans have the power of decision, they shape their living in relation to others and their experiences within time. Being a morally responsible creature means being accountable for the decisions one makes each day, and past, present, and future are linked because one cannot address the future in full hope without a present acceptance of past decisions. The role of faith in “lived-time” depends upon one's acknowledgment of responsibility for past sin, as well as one's hope for a future that is free from guilt and sin. Human beings, unlike other forms of life, are largely capable of anticipating the future, and through this remarkable freedom, the future impinges heavily on the present. As one plans for the future, every expectation, fear, hope, and dream impresses upon present experience. Whatever one hopes for or dreads in the future makes its presence known in current living. It is exclusively within the domain of “lived-time” that both past and future exert tremendous influence over the present. Brunner describes “lived-time” in this manner:

I am never without my past and I am never without my future. Even today I am he who I once was, I am my own history; it belongs to me; without it, without the knowledge of my past, and the persistence of my past in me, I am not a man; the presence and the responsibility for my past gives to me being in its human character. Even so it is in regard to the future. Only as one who anticipates his future in expectation and aim can I be human; for only in reference to my future do I experience my freedom. Just as I am my past I am also my future. What I plan, am anxious about, fear or hope, belongs to my present. The fact that my past belongs to me I experience particularly in the

⁶⁶ In addition to Bergson, Brunner relies heavily Heidegger for this line of thought. See Martin Heidegger *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1962), 236-237.

sense of guilt; the more man feels responsibility for his past, i.e. bears his guilt, the more is he a human being. The more a man penetrates into his future, in planning or expectation, in fear or hope, the more does he experience his specifically human experience.⁶⁷

Without recalling the past and anticipating the future, a person's humanity is in jeopardy, and only through both of these functions of lived-time does a person truly appreciate the unique aspects of human historical being. Brunner is completely reliant upon the categories of tense to define his notion of lived-time and the simultaneity of past and future in the present, and we see in his work how this simultaneous experience of tense reveals how human beings share in the eternity of God.

Brunner writes that God possesses a divine "lived-time," meaning that all events are simultaneously present to God. God is the Lord of time in that it is experienced simultaneously in the "now" of God's life. God's mode of being is that of *durée réelle*, and God experiences all time in the present in an unrestricted and immediate form of live-time. Likewise, although it is limited compared to God's lived-time, within our human lived-time we experience a provisional access to all tenses of time through memory and anticipation. The past becomes present and the future becomes present in moments of simultaneity that are related to God's eternal present.

Moltmann agrees that people experience time in the three modes of past, present, and future, yet it is the present, which is always experienced as a single point in time, which serves as a link between what is past and what is future. The present lies between the past and the future and makes them distinguishable, but it is the ability to transcend the present that gives meaning to the human experience of time.

⁶⁷ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 44.

The present is the hermeneutical key to all time because the past no longer is and the future is not yet. One must employ memory and anticipation in order to transform the past and the future into the present. Future and past may be brought into being from not-being through expectation and remembrance, and in these mediated forms future and past are experienced as present.

In his views on the human experience of time, Moltmann desires to distance his views from the Barthian position that every moment in history is confronted by eternity, yet Moltmann nevertheless believes that it is possible to have an admixture of time and eternity so that people have a momentary experience of eternity within temporality. While human beings live within the earthly, single-track movement of time, they do experience moments of "eschatological fervor," when eternity breaks into history and offers a glimpse of the fulfillment of time. Within the Christian experience, the eternity of heaven occasionally intersects the linearity of earth, and this moment of eternity within time offers a brief perspective of God's own experience of eternity. Moltmann also relies on the concept of simultaneity to describe how eternity is an element of the human experience of the present through simultaneity, when the past and future are present through memory and expectation. Eschatological moments occur within time when the eternity of God manifests in meaningful experiences in the present. These moments of eternity within time have the characteristic of God's own simultaneous eternal life.

The interwoven nature of memory and expectation, of past and future made present, is an "inter-lacing of the times" and is fundamental to the human experience of time.⁶⁸ There is much similarity between Brunner's concept of lived-time and Moltmann's descriptions of human simultaneity in which the past is remembered and

⁶⁸ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 288.

the future anticipated. "Being-that-is-no-longer" and "being-that-is-not-yet" are being through the creative abilities of memory and expectation. The simultaneous experience of time is a person's act of creating in the present that which is not. This simultaneity is possible because "experiences and expectations extend to different modes of being -- here to reality, there to possibility."⁶⁹ Moltmann describes this creative simultaneity as eschatological because when the past and future are present, it is a "relative eternity" which reflects the "absolute eternity" of God.

Moltmann does not deny, however, the reality of the irreversible "flow" of time in human experience and the world, and this flow is marked by transience, change, and death. This earthly time in which human beings live emerges from the moment of inception, but it is part of a "*double form of time*" in creation, the other form of which is *aeonic* or cyclical. Through the patristic concept of *aeonic time* Moltmann describes how human creatures can experience eternity even as temporal beings. This *aeonic* form of time is reflective of God's own eternity, without beginning or end and which continually touches upon earthly time. While earthly time is transitory and inevitably runs along the irreversible time-line of future to present to past, *aeonic* time is cyclical. These two forms of time, linear and aeonic, are reflected in the creation of time: "Earthly creation exists within the context of passing time, but this earthly time, for its part, belongs within the context of the Aeonic time of the 'invisible world', continually touching it and being touched by it."⁷⁰ Humans describe time teleologically because the world's linear experience of time moves in the single direction from future to present to past. *Aeonic* time, however, is circular in nature, and it is the continuing of the present without the loss of the past or the fear of the unknown future.

⁶⁹ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 289.

⁷⁰ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 283.

Surpassing Brunner, Moltmann goes farther to describe the experience of eternity within time as the “eternal moment.” His use of aeonic time distinguishes between the absolute eternity of God and the relative eternity of humanity. *Aeonic* time is the time of the new creation, and it is relative to God's absolute eternity. When he speaks of the consummation of history, he relies on a form of aeonic time to describe how humanity and creation will share in, but not be overwhelmed by, God's eternity. The unrestricted presence of God's absolute eternity will be relatively experienced by creation through its participation in God's de-limited self. In the consummation of creation, the time of the world will not end, but it will be changed from linear time to *aeonic* time. Time will have arrived at its destination in the aeon of consummation, and rather than standing still in *aeonic* time, God's creation will exist in the cyclical joy of God's presence. Created time, which is aligned toward the future, will be transformed into the circular movements of the *aeonic* time of the new creation. The *aeonic* time of eternity is defined not according to length or passage of time but according to the qualitative experience of time. The new creation will exist in an unmediated relation to God, and *aeonic* eternity is a dimension of the joyful quality of life in relation to God.

Aeonic time intersects the present in a moment which is, for Moltmann, a mystical experience of time. *Aeonic* moments surface within people's experiences of God through faith, changing their comprehension of the present:

As an atom of eternity, the fulfilled moment drops out of the sequence of time, interrupts time's flow, abolishes the distinction of the times past and future, in an ecstasy that translates out of this temporal life into the life that is eternal. Eternity in time is a category, not of the extensive life, but of the intensive life. The presence of eternity comes about in the wholly and entirely lived moment through undivided presence in the present.⁷¹

⁷¹ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 291.

In the midst of historical time this moment of eternity, this eschatological moment, is only a fragmentary moment, but it is an experience of aeonic eternity. A moment of eternal life manifests itself in one's temporal experiences, and this moment is an intense possession of the enjoyment and love of life. Because eternal life is not mere timelessness or the absence of death, but it is, rather, *full-filled life*, humans experience this fulfilled life in the present in an *aeonic* moment.⁷² Eternity is the dimension of life in depth and the intensity of the lived life instead of time's endless extension.

The result of *aeonic* moments in the human present is a hunger for the completeness of life lived in the presence of God. Through each momentary experience of eternity, one longs for the fullness of eternal life: "The experience of temporal life is different once an exit from time in the fulfilled moment is experienced as an entry of eternity. Then eternal life already begins here and now in the midst of the life that is transitory, and makes of earthly life a prelude to itself."⁷³ The effect of this eschatological moment is to make one more desirous of the eternal life which awaits people in the future and of which the eschatological moment is only a precursor.

As a way of summarizing their viewpoints, we may say that in their descriptions of the human experience of time, we see a great similarity in the thought of Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann. All three rely heavily on the concept of human memory and expectation, and it is through the human mind that people are able to live in the present moment with their past and future available to them. The concept of simultaneity is vital to all three theologians' work on the subject of the

⁷² Barth describes the eschatological moment as the time when one is faced by the call of God's Word to decision: "This is the secret of time which is made known in the 'Moment' of revelation, in that eternal Moment which always is." *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. from the 6th ed. E. C. Hoskyns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 76.

⁷³ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 291.

human experience of time. Humans are essentially temporal beings and past, present, and future are wrapped together in the human experience as present. In quite similar ways, Brunner and Moltmann tie the human ability to transcend time to aspects of God's transcendence over time. Humans experience time in a way that is similar to God's eternal present.

Crucifixion, Suffering, and Eschatology

No matter how one defines the human experience of time, there is an undeniable truth that each human's time will end in death. Despite the human ability to transcend time within the mind, there is nevertheless an irreversible flow of time in which each person experiences change, decay, and death.⁷⁴ Added to these physical realities are the metaphysical experiences of sin and suffering.⁷⁵ Human beings create their own misery by sinning against others, themselves, and God. Each theologian affirms that the relationship between God and humanity must take into account the fact that this relationship is shattered by sin and death.

The relation between time and eternity is highly relevant for the theological definition of death. Death must be understood according to the purposeful relationship that God has willed to have with human beings, a relationship meant to be one of mutual love and communion. Because humans were created to live in a loving relationship with God, sin is a denial of the only purpose for which one exists.

⁷⁴ A point made especially well by Karl Heim throughout his book, *The World – Its Creation and Consummation*, trans. R. Smith (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1962).

⁷⁵ The fact of transience and death is for Moltmann not the result but the cause of sin: "The frailty of the temporal creation of human beings is like a detonator for the sin of wanting to be equal to God and to overcome this frailty....The vulnerability of creation in the beginning makes the act of violence against life possible. So there is a certain relationship between what we may call sin and what we call death. Even if death is part of the temporal creation, it does not have to be called natural in the sense of being self-evident as a matter of course; and if it is called natural, this 'nature' by no means has to be taken as final. If we turn back from the end to the beginning, then the death of all the living is a sign of the first, temporal and imperfect creation." Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 91.

When a person contradicts his purpose in God through sin, he is dead toward God, and the death of the body is only the final and fullest manifestation of the consequences of sin which separates one from God. Death, therefore, is not only a physical phenomenon that takes place only at the end of one's life: death is present and working throughout a person's life, continually separating him from God. Because each person has turned away from God, who is and who grants life, each person dies in relation to God, and each person, through sin, forfeits life and experiences death. Death is laden with the manifestations of sin and reminders of evil because death signals separation from God, the origin of life and love, as well as separation of people one from another. Death is a reminder that human life is frail, that each human life is corrupted by sin, and that human beings are totally dependent on God for life. Separation and isolation are not the intended ends for the children of God, and without Christ's redeeming activity, death would be the ultimate end for human life.

Human beings were created in God's divine image, yet the image of God in humanity is so marred by sin that eternal life in God's presence is no longer possible; only death remains for the future of humanity. Each person is responsible for his sin, and each person is responsible for his death in relation to God. Through sin, death has become the ultimate consequence for a responsible self: created in the image of God, yet sinful. Human beings who exist in a wrong relation to God through sin are dead, and the godlessness of death is a present experience. For these, the living dead, the present is an experience of separation from the eternal God.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ "When man as a sinner denies his dependence upon God and turns it into independence, he is severed from God, the original source of all life; his guilt stands between the living God and himself as he actually is. The creature destroys the root of its own life, its fellowship with God." Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 3, 386.

What is God's response to the temporal sin, suffering, and death of human creatures? It is the likewise temporal assumption of sin and suffering by God's own self in the cross of Jesus Christ. In the theology of Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann, the death of Jesus is an eschatological event because it is located in history, yet it transcends the historical. It is a temporal event that reveals the love of God and his eternal willingness to suffer for the sake of his beloved human creatures. All three of our representative theologians emphasize the overall eschatological significance of Jesus' life from start to finish, yet they also give particular emphasis to the death of Jesus on the cross. The crucifixion uniquely marks the defining moment in the relationship between God and humanity. With the God-human relationship as a key component of their theology, each theologian examines the eschatological/soteriological elements of this relationship through the cross, and our three theologians speak of the death of Jesus as an event that is filled with eschatological significance.

In regard to time and eternity, what we see in their interpretations of the cross is another strike against the classical definition of God that would equate eternity with impassability. The common themes that run through each theologian's presentation of the cross is that God is not the impassable God as defined by classical theology. To the contrary, Christ's death reveals the ultimate compassion of a God who suffers extremely on behalf of his creatures in order to be reconciled to them. The fact that the Son of God suffers in history is indicative of God's eternal passion and willingness to suffer for human beings. The temporal suffering and death of Jesus reveals God's transcendent love for humanity which is beyond time. The passion and suffering of Christ connote areas of great theological concern for Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann because Christ's vicarious suffering on humanity's behalf

occurs as part of his eschatological mission. Jesus' death is never removed from the larger context of the world's suffering, and Jesus suffers on behalf of the world before God. The suffering and death of Christ is part of the larger eschatological drama which surrounds his entire life and which reaches a climax on the cross.

Mackintosh's most thoughtful work on the cross is found in *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, in which he examines the concept of atonement from a variety of positions. *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness* shares many similarities with his earlier thought in *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, and both works reveal that the concept of atonement through the cross is the pillar of Mackintosh's theology. In *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, Mackintosh delves into the history of the doctrine of atonement before entering his own theological discourse in the latter half of the book. He never wavers from the view that the forgiveness of sins is the cardinal religious experience and central doctrine of the Christian faith.⁷⁷ In *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, Mackintosh also makes several valuable contributions to an eschatological understanding of the cross.

For Mackintosh, the very nature of God is sacrificial love, and while this love is manifested in the whole life of Jesus, it is especially evident in his cross. Through Jesus, the transcendent God is willing to share immanently in the suffering of humanity, thus revealing his love within history. Far from being impassable, God is passionate in his solidarity with human sinners.⁷⁸ The application of impassability to God is not sustainable when one looks at the suffering love of God revealed on the cross. Hence, Mackintosh may state his conclusion that "ideas of the Divine

⁷⁷ Mackintosh, *Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, 1-6.

⁷⁸ "In the Gospels we do see Jesus entering, in just this way, into the lives of sinners by loving communion with their misery. He placed Himself beside the guilty; conscious of the gulf fixed between God and sinners, He crossed in spirit to our side of the breach and numbered Himself with the transgressors....Face to face with Jesus, we become aware, by intuition, that the love in virtue of which He does this amazing thing is positively the love of God Himself." Mackintosh, "The Christian Experience of Forgiveness," 191-192.

impassability derived from ages which were very far from humane, and which too often regarded suffering unconcernedly as a mark of the weak and the vanquished, can now make little appeal.”⁷⁹ The opposite of impassability is the agony God willingly undertakes on the cross:

To us pardon is free because for Him its realization came through agony. The cross represents God’s anguish, an awful grief answering to the greatness of remitted sin. In Him eternally that mind towards the sinful has existed which we behold in the dying Christ....Thus at Gethsemane and Calvary most of all, faith discerns such an exhibition of Divine reconciling passion, such a tragic extension in which God spares Himself nothing, as makes our heart faint within us and stops every mouth before God.⁸⁰

God is opposed to sin, yet God is also sacrificially disposed toward his human creatures. God is so passionately moved by the human condition of alienation that he would spare nothing for our reconciliation. In a way that anticipates those who follow him, Mackintosh knows that the cross reveals God's capacity to suffer on behalf of the human creatures he loves. Far from being impassable, God undergoes tremendous suffering in order to make forgiveness possible because there cannot be forgiveness without judgment and condemnation of sin. In the redemption of humanity, it is God who takes on the great suffering, and forgiveness is granted with a great cost to God.⁸¹

In Mackintosh’s interpretation of the crucifixion, the relation between God's eternity and temporality is seen vividly as the cross is an event that reveals both God’s transcendence over and immanence within time. On the cross God immanently redeemed the world from within, while at the same time God transcendentally transformed Jesus’ suffering into the redemption of the world. God's eternal freedom

⁷⁹ Mackintosh, *Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, 218.

⁸⁰ Mackintosh, *Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, 192.

⁸¹ "The power to forgive, to send forgiveness home to the needy heart, cannot be had for nothing; in God or man it is bought at a price. It is bought only with the suffering of the offended spirit. The electric current that pervades the whole wire flashes into light at its sensitive point; so the timeless pain of God over human evil becomes visible in Christ's passion." Mackintosh, *Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, 216.

becomes evident not through God's instantaneous annihilation of all evil, but, rather, through God's conversion of evil into an act of redemption. Evil is as real as God's transcendent purpose, but God reforms evil into unconscious subservience of his eternal purpose.⁸² Rather than being limited by historical events, God is able to shape even the evils of history toward his loving goal for humanity. The cross of Christ is the greatest act of God's eternal sovereignty over history and its events.

Mackintosh builds up his eschatology of the cross by claiming that the cross offers a special revelation regarding humanity's eschatological standing before God. The cross is an event of great eschatological magnitude because in it God discloses the awful scope of human sin that separates humanity from God. Christ's death on the cross is the historical event that convicts human sinners of their depravity in relation to God. A terrible gulf exists between the moral perfection of Christ and the corrupt desires of humanity, and this sharp distinction between humanity is most evident in what happened to Jesus on the cross: "By its treatment of Jesus Christ, man's sinfulness was exposed: its sheer evil was laid bare to the bone, reprobated, doomed, sentenced without appeal....The fact that God gave Christ to men, and they could do no better than crucify Him, cast a terrible light upon our nature."⁸³ The cross represents all of humanity's sinfully negative behavior toward God, which is summed up in the violent rejection of God through crucifixion.⁸⁴ The cross has this revelatory power in Mackintosh's work, and it shows the great divide that exists between God's goodness and humanity's depravity.

Mackintosh's understanding of the cross' eschatological significance focuses on what may be described as the cross' dual "negative" and "positive" aspects. The

⁸² Mackintosh, *Christian Apprehension of God*, 212.

⁸³ Mackintosh, *Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, 198-199.

⁸⁴ Mackintosh, *Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, 200: "By letting sinful men vent their utmost hate upon Himself, He revealed and condemned sin as the absolute contrary of love."

‘negative’ statements relate to God’s judgment of humanity and resulting condemnation on account of sin. Humanity’s sinfulness is revealed in all its terror in the events of the cross, and God’s condemnation of sin is complete and frightening. And yet, even as the cross negatively reveals the sinfulness of humanity, it positively reveals the magnanimous love of God. The cross is the vehicle of divine love because Jesus is willing to suffer on humanity’s behalf and in its place. The vicarious suffering of Christ is a major theme in Mackintosh’s soteriology, and it is on the cross that God, through Christ, reveals the depth of love that God has for humanity. The cumulative effect of both the negative and positive aspects of Christ’s suffering is that the events of the cross bring a new status for humanity in its relationship with God.

Mackintosh seeks to bring the eschatological significance of God’s judgment against sin from the future into the present through the cross. He does this through his criticism of Ritschl’s move to lodge God’s wrath and judgment in the eschatological future without God’s wrathful reaction to sin having great bearing in the present.⁸⁵ God’s eschatological judgment of sin is a present experience as well as a future event because the current manifestation of the eternal wrath of God against sin is the cross of Christ. While God’s wrath must always be understood in conjunction with God’s love, God’s anger toward sin must be maintained or else the cross losing much of its significance. Mackintosh sees in the cross the divine, eschatological punishment for sin that Ritschl believes is only held in the future: "The reaction of God against sin is evidenced, as we have seen, by loving wrath; and this wrath, it now appears, finds expression in punishment.... All sins are punished by God, and they are punished with a view to their being forgiven. The punishment is an essential part in the very

⁸⁵ Mackintosh, *Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, 160 ff.; *Types of Modern Theology*, 159. See also Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, 321-325.

grace that effects reconciliation at its own cost."⁸⁶ It follows, therefore, that the cross is the means by which God exercises his angry punishment on the sins of humanity with a loving purpose in mind.

When he describes the consequences of sin in the terms of God's wrath, judgment, and condemnation, Mackintosh speaks of the inevitability of God's negative judgment over and against that which is untenable to God's holiness.⁸⁷ Mackintosh also wants to emphasize, however, the positive aspects of the crucifixion because throughout his work he continually views the cross as a vehicle of God's eternal love for humanity. For this reason Mackintosh always speaks of God's wrath in close proximity to God's love. The cross may be the revelation of God's wrath against sin, but it is similarly the fullest expression of God's love for sinners. Humanity receives great benefits on account of Christ's willingness to face death on the cross. Through Jesus' facing the cross, God is personally acting to transform humanity's eschatological future from death to life, and the eschatological future is changed by the cross in a way that no other event could do.⁸⁸

For Brunner the cross serves as an eschatological vehicle which is instrumental in bringing in the kingdom of God. He follows a Reformed understanding of the three-fold office of Christ as Prophet-Priest-King to claim that Jesus fulfills the priestly office of the Old Testament because the death of Jesus is the act of God's grace that brings atonement for human sin. While maintaining that all of Christ's life is an atoning act, Brunner does give special significance to the death of Jesus on the cross. It is the death of Christ – the ultimate descent of God into the

⁸⁶ Mackintosh, *Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, 164.

⁸⁷ Mackintosh, *Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, 198: "The cross is the irreversible condemnation of sin, and a condemnation which is God's act."

⁸⁸ P. T. Forsyth makes the same argument in his *The Work of Christ* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910), 103-105.

abyss of human sin – that is the completion of his life's work and the establishment of the kingdom. Like Mackintosh, Brunner argues that the cross of Christ can be understood only as a result of his life and that his death is the highest point of his saving work. Brunner's main focus, however, is to emphasize how Jesus establishes the eschatological kingdom of God through his death on the cross.

Brunner commends Luther for recognizing that the cross of Christ is the defining mark of Christian faith, and it is in the cross where God offers his most mysterious and marvelous revelation of love. The title *The Mediator* is highly indicative of Brunner's view of Christ as eschatological figure. Jesus earned his title as the Mediator between God and humanity as he willingly showed the tremendous obedience that took him to his death on the cross. Brunner states that humanity's relation with God is always mediated through Christ:

Between the soul and God, between humanity and God, between the world and God, there stands a third element, or rather a third Person, who, although He unites man with God, yet equally maintains the absolute distinction between them; through Him alone that reconciliation takes place through which God reveals Himself: the Mediator.⁸⁹

With this fundamental understanding of Christ's mediating role, Brunner builds a case for Christ's suffering and death within an eschatological framework. The cross is the event through which God reveals the true nature of the identity Christ as Mediator. The meaning of the cross becomes clear only through the actions of the Mediator, and conversely, the Mediator can only be perceived through his personal activity on the Cross.⁹⁰ As the true Mediator between God and humanity, Christ assumes eschatological significance in carrying out his role on the cross.

⁸⁹ Brunner, *The Mediator*, 30.

⁹⁰ Brunner, *The Mediator*, 492.

As he writes on the eschatological meaning of the cross, Brunner seeks to maintain the tension between God's holiness, on the one hand, and God's love on the other. Only by focusing fully on both God's wrathful response to sin and God's merciful response to sin can one truly arrive at an eschatological understanding of Christ as Mediator between God and humanity. Brunner is combating elements of modern theology that diminish the importance of the cross and Christ's atoning death. Brunner condemns theological attempts that remove the need for reconciliation between humanity and God. These attempts have occurred because theologians have sought to minimize the reality of human sin and the gulf between God and humanity on account of sin.⁹¹ Like Mackintosh, Brunner views the cross as God's means of revealing the truth about humanity's great moral distance from God and humanity's urgent need for reconciliation with God. The cross is an event by which God encounters humanity -- all humanity -- personally through the death of Christ. The cross reveals the objective truth about all humanity's sin before a holy God.

The cross reveals the fact that human sin is an affront to the holiness of a righteous God. As in Mackintosh's theology, holiness and love of God remain twin pillars throughout Brunner's work, and he maintains that what is objectively revealed in the cross is God's absolute holiness and absolute love:

At the same moment that we perceive the Divine Will to forgive we perceive also the Holiness of God, and this is the Divine Will to punish. And only where this fact, the Cross of Christ, is understood to mean the working out of this condemnation, do we see in it the revelation of the living, holy, and merciful God....The Cross is the only place where the loving, forgiving, merciful God is revealed in such a way that we perceive that His Holiness and His Love are equally infinite.⁹²

⁹¹ Brunner cites Schleiermacher as a prime example. *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 288.

⁹² *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 469-470.

The main idea that Brunner is protesting against in theology is the idea that God cannot be wrathful or desirous of punishing a human being for his sin. Punishment is viewed to be too anthropomorphic because it carries the notion of revenge. Brunner sees in his day a decay of the church's preaching because the wrath of a holy God has been rejected as an attribute of God: "So long as we continue to reject the scriptural ideas of Divine Holiness, of divine wrath, and of divine righteousness in punishment, the process of decay within the Christian Church will continue."⁹³ Appreciating the eschatological character of atonement means recapturing the biblical understanding of sin as an affront to the holiness of an eternal God.

The passion and suffering of Christ are the Mediator's ultimate act of identification with sinful humanity in its separation from God.⁹⁴ Divine suffering becomes part of the identity of Christ through the cross. Moltmann will also emphasize the suffering of Christ, but we see in Brunner a clear call for theology to remember the eschatological significance of Christ's passion. For Brunner, the deep suffering of Christ is a result of his identification with humanity and the necessity for humanity to suffer for its sinful retreat from God:

The suffering of Christ means both surrender for man and unreserved solidarity with the whole human race; but above all, it means solidarity with that which separates humanity from God, with that therefore which from the point of view of God is a necessity, with the divine wrath, which works death. The Mediator gives himself up completely to this suffering wrath which comes to man from God.⁹⁵

The major difference between Moltmann and Brunner is that while Brunner connects Christ with all humanity in his sufferings, Moltmann does this also by focusing on the victims of sinful human history. Moltmann is, as we shall see, aware of all humanity's

⁹³ *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 468.

⁹⁴ See also Dorothee Sölle, *Christ the Representative: An Essay in Theology after the "Death of God"*, trans. D. Lewis (London: SCM Press, 1967), 139-140.

⁹⁵ *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 495.

separation from God, but he more closely identifies the victims in history as the ones with whom Christ is in solidarity through suffering.

For Moltmann, the basis of Christ's eschatological sufferings is found in the very nature of a God who suffers with and on behalf of his people. This marks a distinction in Moltmann's theology from the classical doctrine of God that disdained the thought of a suffering God. Classical theism held that only human beings, things that are temporal, and created entities suffer because they are transitory, while God is eternal and impassable. Seeking to follow Luther's line that only a "theology of glory" could dismiss God's suffering on account of impassability, Moltmann, following Luther, argues fervently for a "theology of the cross" which takes seriously the suffering of God.⁹⁶ While Moltmann has been criticized for trying to "spin the whole of theology out of a single principle,"⁹⁷ Moltmann draws on both Old Testament and New Testament witnesses to show that God is not only capable of suffering on behalf of his people, but that he does so in a way that reveals suffering as the ultimate sign of God's love.⁹⁸

Moltmann has been identified as a theologian of the cross, yet what is most relevant for us to note is how his views on the death of Jesus contain an eschatological motif.⁹⁹ Moltmann often states that the cross is the focal point for Christian theology: "The death of Jesus on the cross is the center of all Christian theology. It is not the only theme of theology, but it is in effect the entry to its problems and answers on earth. All Christians statements about God, about creation, about sin and death have

⁹⁶ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 227ff.; Bauckham, *Messianic Theology in the Making*, 65.

⁹⁷ Carl Braaten, "A Trinitarian Theology of the Cross," in *The Journal of Religion* 56 (1976): 120.

⁹⁸ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 20ff.

⁹⁹ Don Schweitzer, "Jürgen Moltmann's Theology as a Theology of the Cross," in *Studies in Religion* 24 (1995): 95-107.

the focal point of the crucified Christ."¹⁰⁰ In a manner that is both similar to and distinct from the work of Mackintosh and Brunner, Moltmann develops out of the cross a profound understanding of divine suffering from an eschatological position. The divine pathos of God is focused most intently on the cross, making it the focal point of God's eternal, eschatological suffering on behalf of and in response to the temporal suffering of creation. He is rightly concerned with the problem of theodicy for theology in the modern world, which for him is summed up in the godforsaken horror of Auschwitz.¹⁰¹

Because he takes the problem of evil so seriously, Moltmann moves beyond previous theologians in addressing the problem of evil from both an eschatological and christological standpoint. As a result of this, in Moltmann's theology there is a fusion of eschatology and christology that is unprecedented in Mackintosh and Brunner. Moltmann's eschatological christology therefore adds the dimension of the godforsaken experience of suffering by human beings. Christ suffers not only in a soteriological sense for all humanity, but in his cry of dereliction he identifies with all human beings who have suffered and died as the victims of human injustice and sin.

In *The Crucified God*, Moltmann states that the cross is the truest test of Christian theology and whether or not theological statements are authentically Christian.¹⁰² The highest revelation of God must be found in the cross, and all theological talk must be grounded in a discussion of the cross if that talk is to be faithful to God's revelation in Christ. By making this his starting point for Christology, Moltmann seeks to correct the early Christian tradition which sought to

¹⁰⁰ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 204.

¹⁰¹ Bauckham notes how several events in the late 1960's, including Germany's dealing with the Holocaust, caused Moltmann to shift his focus toward the cross as the main interpretive method for theology. Bauckham, *Messianic Theology in the Making*, 53-56.

¹⁰² Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 7.

separate the two natures of Christ in order to protect the impassability of God. He believes that the Patristic-era church councils made an error by claiming that the divine nature of Christ was incapable of suffering. Attributing suffering to only the human side of Christ denied the importance of the suffering within God's own self, and Moltmann asserts that the cross effects a change within God's own being.¹⁰³

For Moltmann, the cross has consequences for the inner-Trinitarian relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁴ If the cross is to be rightly appreciated, it must be seen to reveal how God suffers within the Trinitarian relationship on behalf of humanity in eternity.¹⁰⁵ For Jesus, his death is as God's child who is abandoned by his Father. The intimacy of Jesus' relationship to God, whom he called *Abba*, makes his cry of dereliction a cry of despair and complete isolation. Jesus' fellowship with God is shattered during Jesus' passion and death:

God-forsakenness is the final experience of God endured by the crucified Jesus on Golgotha, because to the very end he knew that he was God's Son. God's silence, the hiding of his face, the eclipse of God, the dark night of the soul, the death of God, hell: these are the metaphors for this inconceivable fact that have come down to us in the traditions of Christian experiences of God. They are attempts to describe an abyss, a sinking into nothingness; yet they are only approximations to Jesus' final experience of God on the cross, his Job-like experience. The uniqueness of what may have taken place between Jesus and his God on Golgotha is therefore something we do well to accept and respect as his secret, while we ourselves hold fast to the paradox that Jesus died the death of God's Son in God-forsakenness.¹⁰⁶

This profound suffering by Jesus unites him with all those who have suffered the Job-like experience of being abandoned by God. Moltmann's serious engagement with

¹⁰³ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 215.

¹⁰⁴ Richard Bauckham has illustrated how Moltmann's doctrine of the Trinity developed as a way of understanding the meaning of the cross for the whole of God. See Bauckham, *Moltmann: Messianic Theology*, 172.

¹⁰⁵ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 80ff. See also Paul Fiddes, *The Creative Suffering of God* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), 135-140.

¹⁰⁶ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 167.

theodicy inspires him to connect Jesus' eschatological sufferings with those of human beings who suffer immensely within history.

In ways that incorporate history into the larger eschatological portrayal of Jesus' mission, Moltmann describes the dual nature of the cross as both temporal and atemporal, and so he speaks of the "historical" and "eschatological" trial of Jesus. Moltmann believes that what Jesus underwent as he faced a trial before a human court and as he suffered and died on Golgotha has both historical and eternal dimensions. This distinction between the historical and eschatological trial allows Moltmann to portray the cross in light of its human and divine meanings.

On the one hand, Moltmann focuses on the historical setting of Christ as Israel's Messiah under Roman rule. He asserts that Jesus died at the hands of his adversaries who were threatened by his actions. His death must be understood in accordance with the message he preached in the face of the religious and political leaders of his day.¹⁰⁷ The historical trial of Jesus necessarily includes the temporal circumstances and events at a specific time in history which led to Jesus' passion. Through his suffering, Jesus displays his solidarity with all the victims of history who die from oppression and injustice. Jesus died at the hands of a Roman government that killed opposition to its authority. Jesus threatened the authority of the Roman government by claiming an allegiance to God above the emperor, and it acted brutally to end any sedition he could incite among the people. His execution by crucifixion could be carried out only by a Roman governmental decree, and so he was a victim of Rome's oppressive attempt to control its empire. Despite his actions and words to the contrary, the Roman rulers crucified Jesus as one who defied the authority of the government. Jesus also proclaimed a new interpretation of the Law that placed him

¹⁰⁷ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 127.

above Moses, and he offended the religious leaders of his day by appealing to a new standard of righteousness in relation to God. Thus we have the human elements that frame the historical setting of Jesus' passion.

While Moltmann illuminates these elements of the historical trial of Jesus, there is another side to the crucifixion in which it may be regarded as ahistorical. The cultural/religious/political factors alone do not account for the ultimate significance of Jesus' death. Indeed, there is eschatological meaning behind the human events that caused Jesus' death on the cross: "As a merely historical person he would long have been forgotten, because his message had already been contradicted by his death on the cross. As a person at the heart of an eschatological faith and proclamation, on the other hand, he becomes a mystery and a question for every new age."¹⁰⁸ Jesus' crucifixion must also be viewed as an eschatological event of judgment over humanity and its forms of power that are exercised through both religion and government. Jesus' sufferings constitute redemptive suffering on behalf of a world wounded by sin and destruction:

In the context of his message about the kingdom of God, his sufferings are not his own personal sufferings, which he suffers for himself. They are the apocalyptic sufferings which he suffers for the world. They are not fortuitous sufferings. They are necessary. They are not fruitless sufferings, through which something good is shattered. They are fruitful sufferings which, like labor pains, bring forth what is good.¹⁰⁹

The eschatological suffering of Jesus is a vicarious suffering for all people throughout history, and they are redemptive for all as Jesus incorporates suffering into the life of God.

Throughout Moltmann's theology, the problem of theodicy is directly connected with the eschatological desperation of Jesus' suffering on the cross.

¹⁰⁸ Moltmann, *The Crucified*, 162.

¹⁰⁹ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 153.

Moltmann seeks to answer the criticism of protest atheism which cannot accept belief in an all-loving Creator God while there is such tremendous suffering in the world.¹¹⁰ Coupled with protest atheism against a God who allows innocent suffering is the view of traditional theism that describes God as an omnipotent King who fails to alleviate suffering. The cross of Christ, claims Moltmann, negates the argument of both of these views of God because "a theology of the cross which understands God as the suffering God in the suffering of Christ and which cries out with the godforsaken God, "My God, why have you forsaken me?" For this theology, God and suffering are no longer contradictions, as in theism and atheism, but God's being is in suffering and the suffering is in God's being itself, because God is love."¹¹¹ Here we see how Moltmann addresses the theodicy problem by combining it with the traditional understanding of justification through the cross. Temporal suffering is assumed and taken into the eternal life of God. While previous theologians focused on humanity's redemption through the cross, Moltmann adds an approach to understanding how God identifies with the problem of evil.

God's way of dealing with suffering is not to ignore it by remaining aloof. Instead, God's own self suffers evil through the cross, thereby revealing the love of God which suffers with humanity in godforsaken evil. Adding the dimension of suffering to the doctrine of God has been criticized mostly by proponents of feminist theology who protest that Moltmann's soteriology turns God into a dominating sadist who abuses his Son.¹¹² Moltmann addresses this criticism by saying that the surrender of Jesus to God by obedience must not introduce a false distinction between the Father and Son as members of the Trinity. Brunner's emphasis on the cross as the

¹¹⁰ Moltmann's main conversation partner in protest atheism is Albert Camus in *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt* (New York: Vintage, 1956). See also Bauckham, *Messianic Theology in the Making*, 76-84.

¹¹¹ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 227.

¹¹² For example, Dorothee Sölle, *Suffering* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975), 145-150.

appeasement of God's wrath may deserve the feminist critique, but Moltmann avoids it by insisting on the oneness of the Father and Son: "In the suffering of the Son, the pain of the Father finds a voice."¹¹³ Because God himself was in Christ, the Son's suffering was also the Father's suffering. God's love is a suffering love that is prepared to suffer in the Son's suffering and abandonment.

The belief in the cross's revelation of God's love is the shared idea of all three theologians. The suffering of Christ reveals a deeper suffering within God's Trinitarian life, and this suffering is part of God's character in all eternity. God's desire to redeem humanity from sin find personal expression in Jesus' suffering on the cross. Crucifixion is God's act of judgment against sin, and this judgment is issued in the present over every life. Christ's death is efficacious for every life throughout history, just as God's love for humanity is efficacious throughout all eternity.

¹¹³ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 176.

Chapter Three

Redefining Time: The Past

If a dynamic view of time is preferred over the static in order to speak of the nature of reality, what does this mean, by consequence, for the status of events in the past tense: of events that have occurred but are over and no longer real? What past events remain vitally significant for Christian faith even if they are unrepeatable, and how does the past impinge upon the present? Within this category of the past, I wish to examine several topics that have eschatological significance in the work of our three theologians, and I hope to accentuate the underlying theories of time and eternity that are inherent in their descriptions of these events.

Events have occurred in the past which are essential for the meaning of the present even if those events no longer exist, and Christian faith depends on a dynamic interpretation of history – a fact which is evident in the work of Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann. The fact that time is dynamic does not mean that it extends endlessly into the past. To the contrary, time itself had a beginning, and history has a history. The dynamic view of time that I am pursuing is dependent upon God's act of creating time out of nothing. Under the category of the past, I will examine our theologians' views of the beginning, or creation, of time itself. Creation was an act of God which occurred in the past, and along with physical matter, time was created as an element of reality. While Mackintosh is relatively quiet on this topic, Brunner and Moltmann enunciate their views on the creation of time and pronounce God's Lordship over it and the events of history. I will also examine their views of the significance and meaning of history. The time of history is the realm of God's revelations, most importantly the revelation of the Son of God in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Therefore, I will focus attention also on their views on the incarnation and the aspects of time they assume in order to describe the event which fused time and eternity in the person of Jesus Christ.

The Creation of Time

What does it mean to assert that God has created something other than himself? Christians believe that the triune God has been inspired by love to make everything: a creation and all its derivative forms of life. The living God has graciously become the source for other forms of life, all of which require not only a space for existence apart from God but also a duration – a time – in which to live. God endows creation with a distinct space and time in which to exist: dependent upon yet also free from God.

Once again, we turn to Augustine for the classical definition of God's creation of time. In chapter eleven of his *Confessions*, Augustine maintains that time is a consequence of creation. Augustine writes (to God):

You are the originator and creator of all ages. What times existed which were not brought into being by you? Or how could they pass if they never had existence? Since, therefore, you are the cause of all times, if any time existed before you made heaven and earth, how can anyone say that you abstained from working? You have made time itself. Time could not elapse before you made time. But if time did not exist before heaven and earth, why do people ask what you were then doing? There was no 'then' when there was no time...There was therefore no time when you had not made something, because you made time itself. No times are coeternal with you since you are permanent. If they were permanent, they would not be times.¹

Time itself was created with the universe, and time has dependent status because God's relation to time is the same as God's relation to the rest of the physical world -- that of transcendent creator. There were no "times" before creation because all that

¹ Augustine, *Confessions*, 11.1.4.

existed was God. In this sense, Augustine articulates, as he does elsewhere,² his belief that God's eternity is equivalent to timelessness. If time itself existed with God in eternity, then God also would be strictly temporal, which Augustine denies. The important point to note is that Augustine draws a clear line between a God who is above and beyond time and a creation which is, by nature, temporal.

Dynamic time requires a doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. Granted, there are those who argue that this doctrine is not strongly advocated in scripture or essential to a doctrine of creation.³ I am convinced, though, of its scriptural warrant and theological necessity through the defense of *creatio ex nihilo* by both biblical scholars and systematic theologians over the centuries.⁴ This doctrine affirms that God brought the universe into being and that creation has a finite beginning. Time is an element of creation that, along with everything else, emerges from God's act of "speaking" creation into existence, of creating everything out of nothing.

It is not enough to say merely that God sustains the universe at every time of its existence. Even the theologically-minded defender of a static universe could agree to this statement and that whatever exists is tenselessly sustained by the will of God. Without a doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, the world exists timelessly with God, as Brian Leftow, a defender of static reality claims: "God need not begin to do anything, then in order to create a world with a beginning. That action that from the temporal perspectives is God's beginning time and the universe is in eternity just the timeless

² Augustine, *The City of God*, 11.6

³ For views against the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, see Langdon Gilkey, *Maker of Heaven and Earth*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959); Ian Barbour, *Issues in Science and Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 384; Arthur Peacocke, *Creation and the World of Science* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 78-79.

⁴ See Gerhard May, *Creatio ex nihilo: The Doctrine of Creation Out of Nothing in Early Christian Thought*, trans. A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994); Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation, and the Continuum* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 193-252; George Hendry, "Eclipse of Creation," in *Theology Today* 28 (1972): 406-425; Paul Coppan, "Is Creatio ex nihilo a Post-biblical Invention?," in *Trinity Journal* 17 (1996), 77-93; Thomas Senor, "Divine Temporality and Creation ex Nihilo," in *Faith and Philosophy*, 10 (1993), 86-92; and Richard Swinburne, "God and Time," in *Reasoned Faith*, ed. by Eleonore Stump (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 204-222.

obtaining of a causal dependence or sustaining relation between God and a world whose time has a first moment.”⁵ The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* involves much more than a timeless dependence of the universe upon God. Scripture implies that God exists alone “before” bringing the world to exist out of nothing.⁶ Dynamic time emerges from God’s creative act in which time had a starting point.

Brunner states a similar belief in the correlation between the beginning of time and creation by claiming that God’s Lordship over all as the creator includes God’s ability to create time. Brunner writes:

When we say that the world is God's world, we say that it had a beginning. Greek philosophy knows no real creation, because it knows no beginning of the world. For it the world is co-equal and eternal with God. It knows no beginning to the world because it does not know the world as the work of the personal God. When we say: The world has a beginning, we are uttering a paradox, namely that Time has a beginning. In positing the world God also posits Time. Just as he posits Space so also He posits Time. Time and Space are the fundamental constituents of the world as posited by God. This, however, means that Time and Space are finite, not infinite.... From the standpoint of belief in the Creation we maintain the finite character both of actual Time and actual Space.⁷

Brunner is unable to conceive of time as anything other than a finite entity. Time is a “fundamental constituent” of created reality, which also means that it is distinct from God, just as space, all matter, and all creatures are. It would be inconceivable for Brunner to speak of time as infinite because there would therefore be a blurring of the lines of distinction between creator and creation. Temporality exists, therefore, within the boundaries God has set for it, namely the boundaries of a created universe. Nothing exists outside these boundaries: not even time because it is finite.

⁵ Brian Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, *Cornell Studies in Philosophy of Religion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 290-291.

⁶ See John 17:24, Ephesians 1:4, 1 Peter 1:20, Matthew 13:35, Luke 11:50, & Revelation 17:8.

⁷ Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption: Dogmatics*, v. 2, Olive Wyon, trans. (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), 14-15.

What is the nature of this “boundary” that Brunner believes there is between finite time and that which is infinite, i.e. God? Brunner defines this boundary as God’s kenotic disposition toward creation. God possesses a willingness to limit his infinite freedom in order to allow for a creation. God has created something over and against himself, which means that at some point God acted upon his desire to create by limiting his being.⁸ The existence of creation and its temporality reveals God’s decision to limit himself in order to put his creative will into action. God and the world are two distinct entities because God, the Creator, has freely chosen to limit himself in order to make room for the space and time of creation:

It is His will that a second existence, and indeed a very varied and many-sided second existence, a world of very varied creatures, should be over against Himself.... This, however, means that God does not wish to occupy the whole of Space Himself, but that He wills to make room for other forms of existence. In doing so, He limits Himself. He limits Himself by the fact that the world over against Himself is a real existence.⁹

Brunner seems to imply here that Space is a separate entity which is filled by God, thereby making space co-existent and eternal with God. We have seen above, however, that this is not Brunner’s intent. Space and time together form a reality that is distinct from God and which finds its origin in God’s desire to create.

It is this choice of God to limit his own being that makes creation a separate reality. This kenotic, creative resolve of God is exercised “before”¹⁰ God creates,

⁸ The question of why God created *when* he did is addressed from a variety of angles. Brian Leftow observes that God must have changed in such a way as to acquire a reason to create the world. See Leftow, “Why Didn’t God Create the World Sooner?” *Religious Studies* 27 (1991), 157-172.

⁹ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 20.

¹⁰ Brunner does not speculate on a temporal location for God’s decision to create: “When we say: ‘Time has a beginning’, we are not, of course, saying that we know what this beginning is....The finite character of Time, the fact that time has a beginning, does not mean that we know this brief beginning or that we shall ever know it.” Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 16. Modern cosmology has the benefit of the Big Bang theory to postulate ideas about the beginning of time and creation, so that Davies can write: “An initial cosmological singularity therefore forms the past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity. For this reason most cosmologists think of the initial singularity as the beginning of the universe. On this

and Brunner ties this decision to create to God's attribute of omnipotence. It is within God's power to limit himself and enable a creation to exist. Whereas Moltmann links God's self-restriction with God's omnipresence and omniscience, Brunner draws a connection between God's omnipotence and self-limitation. Brunner writes:

The course of Nature in the created universe has, it is true, some connection with certain limitations to God's power, and this is the second important element in the idea of Omnipotence; namely, that God *limits Himself* by creating something which is not Himself, something "over against" Himself, which he endows with a relative independence. Thus it is God Himself who creates this limitation -- hence He is also free to remove it. He creates it, He limits Himself, in order that a creature may have room alongside of Himself, in whom and to whom He can reveal and impart Himself. Thus from the very outset the Biblical idea of God as Almighty is related to revelation. It can only be understood in its correlation with this divine self-limitation which lies in the nature of His Creation.¹¹

God must be capable of limiting himself or otherwise a creation could not exist. For anything to exist, it must have "room" or a space, as well as a time in which to exist. God powerfully limits his own being to create the criteria necessary for created life. Brunner recognizes the need to understand creation in relation to God's self-imposed limitation of his attributes. The nature of God's existence is such that without some form of a chosen, self-limitation on God's part, creation could not exist. Time is, therefore, an outcome of God's self-imposed limitation of his eternal being.

Like Brunner, Moltmann follows the classical line that time has a created beginning and that time is not co-eternal with God. Moltmann, however, goes into greater detail than Brunner does as he describes the "order" of time's creation, and he elaborates on why this order helps to clarify the difference between Creator and creature. Moltmann also employs a similar kenotic approach in order to avoid any

view the big bang represents the creation event, the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself." Paul Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology and Black Hole Evaporations," in *The Study of Time III*, ed. J. T. Fraser, N. Lawrence, and D. Park (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1978), 78-79.

¹¹ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 251.

blurring of the lines between time and eternity, and he does so by delineating between different "moments" of creation. These moments spell out the ways in which God limits his own being in order to make room for another "being" -- a creation that is other than himself. Brunner began this line of reasoning within his doctrine of creation, and Moltmann advances it farther as he demonstrates the beginning of time in the creative "resolve" of God.

In his views on the creation of time, we can see Moltmann's reliance upon aspects of Jewish theology to describe the manner in which God limits himself in order to dwell with humanity in creation in an immanent way. For example, the transcendent God of Israel restricts himself in order to concentrate his being in such places as the Temple. Immanent communion between God and humanity is possible only through an inversion of God's transcendence in order to make God immanently available to human beings within time and space. This kenotic principle of self-limitation lies behind Moltmann's distinctions of different "moments," the *primordial moment* and the *moment of inception*, in regard to creation of time.

For Moltmann, all creation is contingent upon the gracious will of the free creator to decide in favor of something other than himself. It is this power of decision that Moltmann seizes upon to illustrate how God chose in favor of another form of being -- a temporal creation -- that is different from God's own existence in eternity. God resolved to restrict his eternity and omnipresence in order to allow time and space for creation. Moltmann speaks of God's creative resolve as the "primordial moment" of creation:

In his omnipresence God makes a place for his creation, by withdrawing his presence from this primordial space. God restricts his eternity so that in this primordial time he can give his creation time, and leave it time. God restricts his omniscience in order to give what he has created freedom. These primordial self-restrictions of God's precede his creation...Only when God withdraws himself to himself,

and restricts and concentrates himself within himself, can he call into existence something other than himself and outside himself, something that is not divine in nature, and is thus not eternal and omnipresent. If a person resolves for himself to do something for someone else, this resolve already implies a concentration of many possibilities to this particular one. Self-determination and self-restriction are the same thing. Both presuppose a self-alteration on God's part in eternity.¹²

We may quickly wonder about Moltmann's logic and the meaning of such ideas as God's "withdrawing himself to himself" and "concentrating himself within himself." He intends to state a kenotic limitation on God's part, yet how can God withdraw further and further into himself? Is there a point where God "withdrawing" creates a vacuum?

The primordial moment was the action of God's deciding to restrict and to limit his eternity and omnipresence, thereby making a time and a space available for creation that is other than God's own eternity and omnipresence. Prior to God's act of creating, God chose in favor of a creation, and the event of this choosing was the primordial moment. Time, which was made along with every other created entity, is possible only because God first chose a self-limitation in order to make beings and entities other than himself.

The moment of the inception of time is the point at which time began with the rest of creation. It follows the primordial moment, and time and space spring from the moment of inception. In the act of creation, time emerges from eternity and begins the movement of what is understood as the linear advance of time and the distinction of time as past, present, and future. The moment of inception coincides with the "speech" of God which calls forth creation out of nothing. The simultaneous creation of time and matter extends from the moment of inception, from which time

¹² Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 281-282.

and matter continue to extend and will continue until creation's consummation in the kingdom of God.

The Lord of History

Following this consideration of God's creation of time, we now turn our attention to the question of time's continuance: what is history? Is the temporal stream of events that forms history random and subject to chaotic forces with no discernable movement toward an End? Or is history, as a place of change and becoming, a dynamic realm in which God is bringing creation toward a final goal in God's will? The dynamic view of time that I am favoring sees history as the field of temporal events by which God is indeed bringing redemption -- to humanity and to creation as a whole. God gives a freedom to creation through his kenotic act of creating, yet this freedom is not absolute independence. This freedom allows for the possibility of opposition to God, yet this opposition is not stronger than God's moral will acting in history to bring creation to God's desired goal in his glory. As we examine our three theologians' views on history, we shall see that they adhere to a dynamic, tensed view of time in order to maintain God's Lordship over what he has created.

Writing as he did in the early years of the twentieth century, Mackintosh finds himself in a struggle against philosophical impulses which deny the importance of temporal events in relation the eternal, unchanging Truth of God. G. E. Lessing states this impulse by claiming that "accidental truths of history can never become proof of the necessary truths of reason."¹³ Mackintosh reacts strongly to this philosophical

¹³ G. E. Lessing, "On the Proof of the Spirit and of Power," in *Lessing's Theological Writings*, ed. and trans. Henry Chadwick (Stanford University Press, 1956), 53.

denial of the reality and significance of historical events because such a dismissal of history results in a disdain for the necessity of God's interaction with the world through historical events. Mackintosh critiques this disdain of the philosophical view of history by engaging the work Hegel, whose thought, while in some ways sympathetic to Christian doctrine, is nevertheless a great challenge to it. Hegel denies any lasting importance to events in history, and Hegelian appraisals of Christianity, such as that of A. E. Biedermann, scorn the specific redemptive acts garnered by the life of the historical Jesus.¹⁴ An Hegelian approach disregards the teachings and actions of the historical Jesus in favor of the ideal of a divine-human unity in the figure of the God-Man, and the life of the world is fused with God's own being.¹⁵ Mackintosh sees Hegel's thought as a merging of God and humanity into a pantheistic, indistinguishable unity, and as a consequence of this, time and history fade away into the ether of eternity.¹⁶ The notion of a personal God who interacts with and is involved in people's lives is replaced by Pure Being, to which the human mind must be united. Hegel regards theology, not with absolute hostility, but with a

¹⁴ Biedermann's Hegelian approach favors the principle of Redemption over the historical person of the Redeemer so as to render Jesus of Nazareth as largely irrelevant. See C. Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, I (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 160-167.

¹⁵ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, trans. R. F. Brown (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 288.

¹⁶ Mackintosh's further summarizes Hegel's thought with this paragraph from his articulate essay on Hegel in *Types of Modern Theology*: "To Hegel philosophy is the supreme court of appeal, and faith, to be justified in its claims to real truth, must obtain a certificate of competence from the speculative examiner, whose verdict is final. It is true, Christian doctrine has a price to pay for any such philosophical certificate. Thus no more must be heard regarding the uniqueness of the historical Christ, or the once-for-all character of His mediation; that too is a symbol or earthen vessel enshrining a grand metaphysical idea. The doctrine of the God-man is a picture, and a sublime one, by means of which human thought has in the past been enabled to rise to, and grasp, the ultimate truth that Divinity and Humanity are one in essence, that the life of man is the life of God in temporal form, and that the two natures, the Divine and the human, can only realize themselves through vital unity with each other. In like manner, the death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ are noble imaginative presentations of ideas to which philosophy must ever attach a high importance. They are, so to speak, parabolic statements of the fact that finite man, construed merely as finite, is inevitably the prey of negation and decay; yet view him in the light of his unity with the Infinite, and straightway he rises and mounts to a lofty and positive participation in the pantheistic world-process. Thus the story of man is the history of God's becoming, the self-evolution of Absolute Reason spelling itself out in the medium of space and time. In this sense, but no other, the Word took flesh and dwelt among us." *Types of Modern Theology*, 107-108.

simplicity that appreciates theology as a stepping stone to the more valid and more important path of Speculative Rationalism. Hegel concludes that the symbols of faith are merely lower forms of philosophic reflection on the nature of the Eternal. For Hegel, speculative philosophy offers a purer, clearer access into the Infinite Mind of the Universe, which is, in fact, in the same process of development with the finite mind of humanity.

The effect of Hegel's approach is to render events in history as largely inconsequential in the relation between God and humanity. Truth is found by Hegel, not in God's revelations in history, but in the developing unity of the finite and the Infinite. The main problem with Hegel's approach is his failure to appreciate the validity and reliability of historical events and the fact that these events are not merely ephemeral but are the very events by which God redeems and saves humanity.¹⁷ Mackintosh determines that in Hegel's thought "each part of history tells the same story, as each uniform leaf betrays the nature of the tree. Hence no event may claim unique significance, nor can faith rightly profess to see one majestic Divine purpose guiding all to a sovereign consummation. All historical facts are but transient individualizations of an eternal and unchanging content."¹⁸ If all historical events are insignificant occurrences in the passage of temporal un-reality, then the specific events in Israel's history, and, most importantly, in the life of Christ, are likewise unnecessary in the saving relationship between God and humanity.¹⁹

¹⁷ For a similar assessment of Hegel by a contemporary of Mackintosh, see Friedrich von Hügel, *Eternal Life: A Study of its Implications and Applications* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913), 201-223.

¹⁸ Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*, 109.

¹⁹ Mackintosh's adamant reinforcement of the necessity of history is a continuation of the work of other 19th Century thinkers, namely Albrecht Ritschl and Ernst Troeltsch. One of the great strengths of the Ritchlian influence on Mackintosh is his adamant appreciation for the necessity of the history of Christianity's claims. In opposition to the 19th Century disregard for the historicity of the life of Christ, Mackintosh maintains that faith is grounded in specific events, locations, and especially in the historical person of Jesus Christ. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*, 105-106.

Mackintosh focuses primarily on the concept of history and the necessity of real, historical events through which God works to redeem humanity, and his intent is to demonstrate the importance of history as containing the means by which God is enacting the divine plan for humanity's redemption. His eschatology depends on the sense of a dynamic historical process under the willful guidance of a loving and holy God. Against any scientific or philosophical view of history that excludes God, Mackintosh writes:

The concept of a material cosmos ruled by inflexible laws has caged the modern mind, at times even though that mind is Christian; and we look out to the face of God, often, sadly and half-mistrustfully through the bars of the uniformity of Nature. If we listen to Christ, He can impart to us the certitude of an almighty Father wielding all that is meant by Nature for the accomplishment of unspeakably gracious ends. Faith in Him as Redeemer renders sheerly unthinkable the notion of the world as a closed and calculable system of effects and causes.²⁰

Mackintosh believes that scientific discoveries of the laws of nature should not exclude the activity of God in sustaining and redeeming the world. He senses an attempt to “cage” humanity in a world that is not subject to God’s Providence or power. It is a denial of God’s Lordship to propose that God is unable to act in the natural processes of the world. Scientific discoveries on the processes of the natural world that deny God the ability to encounter human beings and act on their behalf within the space and time that God has created would be to deny God’s Lordship over what he has made.

To the contrary, the phenomenal world is the very place in which God is acting for the very purpose of bringing about his kingdom. It is God’s will to act in powerful and redeeming ways to ensure that his kingdom is not thwarted by the

²⁰ Mackintosh, *The Christian Apprehension of God*, 205.

freedom God has given to creation. Creation is laden with a purpose that God is achieving within temporality:

The Divine purpose will be interpreted, not as I hope unnaturally, as meaning the Kingdom of God, which He is realizing in time and will make perfect under eternal conditions. By the word “Kingdom” is signified, after the pattern of Scripture, a phenomenal order which gives full expression or embodiment to God’s holy and loving will for all His children....Time, even for the leading minds of classical antiquity, tended to be mere barren phantasmagoria. It was not conceived as laden somehow with Divine purpose working out a mighty consummation, the earlier periods throwing their results forward into the coming ages, and the *denouement* of the End gathering up into itself the abiding issues of the whole process.²¹

History, then, must be dynamic because within time there is change and becoming as creation is led to something greater than itself. For Mackintosh, there is a richness to history that it gains from being the subject of God’s loving and holy will and guidance. History for Mackintosh is a field of progress and purpose in which all events are connected and impinge upon later stages in their relation to the End toward which God is guiding history. Nothing, in the end, will be lost to God as all periods and results (or events) of the process of history are gathered up in the End.

The key to unlocking Mackintosh’s view of the richness of history is to see it as a “moral operation”, or in other words, to note how temporality is connected to the will of a holy God. God’s acts within time and thereby ensures that “history is a moral operation. The kingdom of God is coming on earth. A redemptive purpose is being executed on the grand scale and will throw its results far on into coming ages.”²² As temporal creatures who are encountered by God,

we find ourselves in contact with a universe not really interpretable as a closed circle of forces, all the changes of which can be computed in advance by a mind sufficiently powerful. It is a universe rather whose apparent iron uniformity is but a fragment of the whole. God is a free

²¹ Mackintosh, *The Christian Apprehension of God*, 200-201.

²² Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 6.

spirit, able to bring events to pass which transcend all finite forces acting with mechanical rigor, able to release into the phenomenal order the pent-up fullness of His own Divine activity. Reality is rich, plastic, full of unimaginable potentialities. It is susceptible of new departures, and the preferential action of God affects its movements by way of real initiation.²³

With this view in mind, we may say that Mackintosh clearly subscribes to a dynamic interpretation of time which allows for God's action to change and mold people and events according to his holy and loving will. Reality is "plastic" in God's hands because temporal potentialities are subject to God's will and not an "iron uniformity" that is devoid of divine possibility.²⁴

Hegel's theory of history fails to distinguish between the Creator of time and the creatures that experience it. There is a blurring of the stark distinction between God and humanity when temporality and specific events in history are not viewed as necessary for the Divine-human relationship. This is an untenable confusion over the understanding of the main difference between God and humanity. If philosophers and theologians alike center their thoughts on the concept of God's "infinite" being, meaning that God is infinitely ubiquitous and in all things, then "God" means the "Whole of Being" or the "Entirety of the Universe." According to this logic, creation is just one part of a reality in which all finite beings are absorbed into one larger Whole that is the infinite God. The historical process is then merely the Spirit of God's outworking as God "realizes" himself in all that is. Temporality does not stand on its own as a distinct, created element and something other than God. This view will not suffice because the distinction between God and creation, between the eternal God and time, is one that must be maintained if creatures are to understand themselves rightly in relation to the God who made them. They themselves are not

²³ Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, 458-359.

²⁴ Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 14.

part of God and hence divine. Only God is divine, and humans who fail to realize this succumb to the temptation to set themselves in the place of primary importance.

Mackintosh finds that theology too often surrenders to the Hegelian impulse to "spiritualize" history in order to cleanse it from the mess of mundane, corporeal reality. For Mackintosh, however, since reality is primarily temporality, theology is wrong to attempt to "ascend" to the world of un-embodied Ideas. Faith means trusting in the God who reveals himself in historical events, and faith is not the cleavage of one's rational mind to an eternal Mind/God, above and beyond the dull and difficult modes of earth-bound existence. The perennial temptation of theology is to succumb to the idea that the specifics of history and time matter less for redemption than one's own attempts at a spiritual "escape" from life in the present. Latent in this spiritual-philosophical approach is the assumption that because Truth is timeless and eternal, faith in the eternal God therefore exists independently of events in history. In contrast to the Hegelian approach to history, which is static in its conception of reality²⁵, Mackintosh favors a dynamic view of history as a moral realm of God's progressive revelations that culminate in the historical person of Jesus Christ. He argues that history and finality, or Absolute Truth, are not mutually exclusive: "If it be said that the Gospel as involved in history must consent to be equally relative with other facts in the time-series – that it has to choose, in short, between historicity and finality – the answer is that this is pure assumption, and assumption must be changed if it conflicts with real phenomena."²⁶ Mackintosh insists that history is not negatively or neutrally related to God, but, rather, that history is the positive realm of God's revelations of his loving will toward humanity. Time is at the disposal of God's saving activity, and

²⁵ Mackintosh describes this view in temporal terms: "For much contemporary thought it is axiomatic that nothing real ever moves." Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 5.

²⁶ Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, 309-310.

“history then is such that salvation may come by way of it...Salvation must be mediated through history. Humanity can be saved only from within.”²⁷ Mackintosh’s conclusion is that history is dynamic and that God exercises redemption by bringing about real changes in the relationship between God and humanity temporal events.

Brunner echoes much of Mackintosh’s thought in regard to his theory of history as he similarly describes temporal reality at the disposal of God’s power and action. History is such that it is capable of containing God’s revelations as God guides creation toward its Goal in God’s kingdom. History is not cyclical, and events in time are essential to God’s ultimate purpose for creation: “History is the field in which what is new and of unique occurrence happens. History as a movement towards an end has assumed a direction and a meaning, an absolute divine meaning which makes its total claim upon man.”²⁸ Based on his kenotic interpretation of the creation of time, Brunner contends that defining a goal for creation is possible only when its origin can be identified. Just as time had its origin in God’s act of creation, so also will time have its end in God’s act of consummation, and along the way of history God is guiding creation toward its End.

The fact that God decides in favor of temporal events means that God is Lord over time as its creator and that time is at the disposal of God’s will. God’s power created time, and God’s power shall bring time to its fulfillment. The flow of time is not random or haphazard, but, rather, history is moving toward a purpose which shall be achieved in consummation. God’s Lordship over time means that time’s beginning and end are held within the scope God’s eternal plan. History becomes the theater in which God is realizing the divine goal for humanity along with all creation:

²⁷ Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 16.

²⁸ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 32.

Just as time has a beginning so also will it have an end. It will be dissolved, in the fullness of time, in eternity....But the beginning and the end are held together by God's eternal plan, and God manifests His Lordship over time by the fact that from the beginning He aims at the end. For this reason there is history not only of humanity but of the cosmos. All is moving towards an ultimate goal. Everything has its place within this world-history. The goal and the meaning of this world-history towards which all is oriented is eternal life in the communion of God and creature.²⁹

Thus we see in Brunner's thought the conception of time as subsumed under the purpose of the redeeming will of God.³⁰ In Brunner's thought, all aspects of creation and all peoples of history have an eschatological goal toward which they are moving, and just as each person has an eschatological future, so also does all creation. God retains ultimate power as creator over all things, and God rules over time as its origin and end.

To describe the movement of history toward an eschatological goal, Brunner divides history into two simultaneous and intertwined tracks of temporal occurrences. He identifies two channels of historical reality, and they run parallel to one another, although one channel remains invisible without faith. These two tracks of *general history* and *saving history* run concurrently and are inseparable, although saving history, or the history of God's redemption, is discernible only when one is guided by God's revelation.³¹

General history is a vast realm that is open to broad fields of human inquiry, and the events of general history can be observed and discussed from innumerable

²⁹ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 52. On the relation of the beginning to the end, Brunner writes: "The fact that Time has a beginning is just as important as the other fact, that it has an end. Its end coincides with the end of created existence. This end, however, is not 'nothing-ness', but it is the Goal which is both the end and the completion of the created universe. God Himself is the End of Creation, but this does not mean that He will be once more without a creation, as at the beginning; but it means that He will glorify Himself in Creation, and give Himself to it, in such a way, that it will shatter the framework of the created universe as we know it." Brunner: *Dogmatics*, v. 2. 16.

³⁰ Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation: Dogmatics*, v. 3, trans. David Cairns (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 340.

³¹ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 194.

angles and approaches. The general history of the world is the story of human events and cultures, and general history is inclusive also of occurrences in the natural, non-human world.³² Inquiries into the general history of the world investigate the achievements of peoples and societies from Ancient Greece to Medieval England to modern China. Plato, Shakespeare, and Mao Tse-tung and all their works form the subject matter of general history. In addition, because general history includes aspects of the natural world, such as the earth's geologic ages, the natural sciences shed great light into the understanding of the world's general history. Paleontology and zoology, among many other fields of knowledge, comprise the barometers that measure the effects of the development of general history. General history does not require the intense personal commitment of its observers that saving history does, and study of the general past does not generate transformation in the present.

Independent of theology, one may historically approximate Jesus' life and ministry to the time of Pontius Pilate's reign in Judea and the period of Roman authority in Galilee. As a person, Jesus belongs to general history in the same way that Kublai Kahn and Joan of Arc do. The death of Jesus on a Roman cross belongs to the realm of general human history, and in this sense, the Bible records generally historical material. Even if one insists that the biblical history of Jesus is biased by the early church's mission and the writers' beliefs, one can neutrally accept that the accounts are based upon a real historical figure whose life occurred in the chronology of the world's history. The historically unique person Jesus lived in a certain period of time, and his life, like every person's, was bound by spatial and temporal limits. As an historical person who lived at a specific time, Jesus had a history which coincides with the overall history of the world.³³

³² Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 196.

³³ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 199.

While the events of general history are open for universal observation, the general historian cannot grasp the significance of the theological events that comprise salvation history. Salvation history, in striking contrast to general history, makes personal demands on the individual considering it, and it cannot be discerned from a neutral, objective point of view. Salvation history is hidden within the events of general history, and one must observe it through the eyes of faith.

One can categorize many of the events in Israelite history and those of the life of the man Jesus within the general history of the world, yet the theological weight of these events is clear only when they are understood as moments of God's activity in salvation history. The events of God's interaction with the world are moments of revelation, and they are times when God is revealing his holy and loving will for creation. Salvation history is real, but hidden, within general history, and the only way to perceive salvation history is through the trust that comes with faith. Only through the eyes of faith one can recognize the Son of God in the man who appears as a person like everyone else. The Son of God's saving identity is hidden within the visible identity of Jesus of Nazareth. Likewise, God's guiding and saving activity for Israel lies within the events in the life of the nation and its leaders and people. It lies in the domain of the historian of salvation history, the theologian, to elucidate the significance of God's activity in saving history.

How convincing is Brunner in his description of history's two tracks – general history and salvation history? Brunner struggles to characterize the relationship between general and salvation history because he seeks to explain how salvation history is included within general history, while acknowledging that the former is not recognizable to all people. That which can be apprehended through investigation of general history is the visible “shell” of the invisible “kernel” of salvation history, and

yet this kernel, which drives all history on toward its consummation, remains largely unseen and unknown.³⁴

I believe that Brunner's two-track approach to history has merit because it relies on an argument that distinguishes between the phenomenology of events in the two realms of history as he defines them. Events in general history are *relatively* unique, meaning that while each occurrence is a new event, it remains dependent upon other events for its meaning and place within the larger scope of history. An event is unique relative to other unique events which frame its occurrence. Events in salvation history, however, are *absolutely* unique because they draw their meaning from outside the realm of general history. An event in salvation history is absolutely unique because its significance derives only from its place in that history. For example, the execution of a man named Jesus on a Roman cross is relatively unique and can be apprehended by secular history. That this event wrought atonement for human sin is an absolutely unique fact, and its meaning is determined by the events of salvation history. Brunner writes:

Whereas the uniqueness which the historian can appreciate in the person and story of Jesus is a relative uniqueness, what faith apprehends as God's act and word in atonement and redemption is something absolutely unique.... The historical event on Calvary, fundamentally appreciable by everyone as such, is the visible shell of the invisible kernel – the absolutely unique – which can only be apprehended by faith.³⁵

An action of God, and only God, is always absolutely unique, while any world event is always relatively unique in relation to other world events.

The factor that makes Brunner's approach to salvation history important is precisely his reliance on faith as the necessary hermeneutic for interpreting certain historical events as God's revelation. Faith is necessary in order to understand

³⁴ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 35.

³⁵ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 35.

temporality and historical events as constituent parts of salvation history. In order for theology to maintain a dialogue with other fields, it must acknowledge that general history is open to investigation by various methods. Insisting on a faithful approach to salvation history does not shut down conversations between theology and science. Rather, it opens up another dimension to history that sciences must reckon with and grapple to understand. Brunner's scheme of history is one that allows theology to embrace the discoveries of science regarding creation, and it challenges science to acknowledge that events in time have a purpose that only theology can illumine. This purpose is the redemption of the world by God.

Added to the distinction between general history and saving history is the concept of personalism, and Brunner integrates this concept into his interpretation of history from creation to consummation. Brunner accentuates the idea that the domain of time is necessary for personal encounter between God and human beings.³⁶ God created all that is, but not everything possesses the personal nature of being. The sedimentation of rocks and the formation of stars are important for understanding the development of the natural world, but these natural phenomenon are trivial compared to the engagement within history between God and humanity. Human history, as distinct from natural history, is the dimension of personal encounter and decision-making, and the process of humanity's development, unlike that of nature, involves the free decisions of human beings over and against their environment. Unlike the history of the natural world and its evolution, human history is the sphere of national destinies and cultures, and it is the arena of conflict, encounter, and, most importantly, decision.³⁷ Time, therefore, becomes the necessary condition which enables personal encounter between God and human beings, and human living within temporality

³⁶ Jewett, *Brunner's Concept of Revelation*, 27-28.

³⁷ Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 440.

necessarily entails decisions in harmony or disharmony with God's purposes. To understand truly what it means to live as human, one must recognize one's obligation for a decision in favor of faith in God.³⁸ Throughout life, one is encountered by the personal God who loves, creates, and redeems, and each human exists under the responsibility to decide for or against God. This is the ultimate definition of what it means to be a personal creature who exists in time: one who is encountered by God.

Throughout his career Moltmann has been occupied by the effort to redefine time and history along radically different lines from that of Mackintosh and Brunner. *Theology of Hope* seeks to examine how eschatology undergirds all of history as the principle which gives history its meaning, yet the traditional account of salvation history is one that Moltmann rejects. History is the realm of God's promises, and as such it is not cyclical but is moving toward the fulfillment of the promises that God has spoken into and over history. But history itself does not contribute to the eschatological end God has in store for it. Whereas Mackintosh and Brunner affirm that the historical process itself reveals and is leading to the kingdom of God, Moltmann absolutely rejects the notion that historical progress is the means by which the eschatological future is secured. History is not synonymous with the coming eschatological kingdom of God, and a progressivist approach to history will not yield the eschatological future.

Moltmann dismisses theories of salvation history as nothing better than Enlightenment theology. To equate temporal history with salvation history "is nothing other than historical Deism. God becomes the watchmaker of world history and author of a master blueprint of foreknowledge. Once it has been drawn up, he has no further need to intervene. The calendar will one day bring 'the day of Jesus

³⁸ Jewett, *Brunner's Concept of Revelation*, 74-79.

Christ'. Where is God's freedom in all this?"³⁹ Here we see just how much Moltmann differs from Mackintosh and Brunner in his understanding of time in that he greatly distances himself from their notion of the temporal process as progressively leading toward a teleological End. Whereas Mackintosh and Brunner propose a view of salvation history as continually building upon itself toward a goal under the guidance of God, Moltmann offers a radically different interpretation which denies history of such an internal progress.

In his disdain for salvation history, Moltmann sees great injustice and violence in the "progress" of humankind over the centuries. History is the struggle of humanity against itself, with the powerful winning out over the poor and the marginalized: "Isn't history, pictured as progress, always at the same time an instrument of domination – the domination of one society, one class and the one, present generation, an instrument used to suppress all the others and take possession of them? And isn't history, pictured as progress, also an instrument for subjecting nature to the will and intentions of human beings?"⁴⁰ Human history is written from the perspective of the "winners" while the losers remain victims of injustice and shame.

For Moltmann, history should not be viewed progressively as a homogeneous line, where the future can develop only out of what is past and where all of time is leading up to the eschatological event of the consummation. Rather, Moltmann capitalizes on the concept of *promise* to give the future an ontological priority over the past and present: "Promise announces the coming of a not yet existing reality from the future of the truth...The 'possible', and wherewith the 'future', arises entirely from God's word of promise and therefore goes beyond what is possible and

³⁹ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 13. See also Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 71-75.

⁴⁰ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 125.

impossible in a realistic sense. It does not illuminate a future which is always somehow already inherent in reality.”⁴¹ Time and history, therefore, are qualified, not by what has happened before or presently but by the potentiality of the future.⁴² The future is the source from which time springs, and this future is transcendent over the past and present, thereby opening up the possibility of something radically new within time. Because of these constructive potentialities, history is the time of promise in which the future is transcendent over the past and present. The time of earthly creation is dynamic in that it is constantly open to change in regard to events which come from the future.

Here we see Bloch’s influence on Moltmann’s theory of history as Moltmann describes the future as the "sphere of the possible," the past as the "sphere of the realized," and the present as the "sphere in which the possible is either realized or not realized." What is possible is future, what is real is present, and what is past is unchangeable. All temporal events are irreversible and unrepeatable because potentiality and reality are vastly different modes of existence. Moltmann gives the future "preference" over the past and the present because the future is comprised of realized potentiality: “If reality is realized potentiality, then potentiality must be higher ontologically than reality. If out of the future there is past, but out of past never again future, then the future must have pre-eminence among the modes of time.”⁴³ Since time is irreversible, the source from which history springs lies in the future, and this allows one to look forward to the future with hope. The scars of the past remain, yet the future is the realm of a possibly different reality that will come

⁴¹ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 85.

⁴² For Moltmann’s analysis of and indebtedness to the four Jewish philosophers Bloch, Rosenzweig, Scholem, and Benjamin in this regard see CG, 29-41. See also, Bauckham, “Time and Eternity”, 161-166.

⁴³ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 287.

into being. One gives pre-eminence to the future because it is the source of new reality and therefore hope.

History is, then, the history of Jesus Christ, because he is the promise of the future that has been spoken into time. Earthly time is always oriented toward the future, but the entirety of history and time awaits the full salvation of God from outside of history. The dynamic history of Christ is fundamentally temporal, therefore, and the continuing passage of time is part his history because Christ's mission was not fully completed at his resurrection. Like Brunner, Moltmann believes that Christ's full glory remains veiled until its full disclosure at the parousia and consummation of creation. Time is for Moltmann, consequently, “eschatologically charged” as Christ continues to rule and to reconcile until he can hand his kingdom over to God. There remains an the outstanding advent of God yet to come when the kingdom shall come with him. In the Christian world-view, all history and all people await the coming of Christ to make all things right and to initiate the new creation.

Incarnation, Time, and Eschatology

The incarnation of the Son of God is a thing of the past: it was a once-and-for-all event that took place within a human life at a specific time in a certain location. It belongs to history, and Christians look back and remember the incarnation in the annual celebration of Christmas. It was a unique historical event, as Mackintosh states: “For all religion controlled by the New Testament our Lord is not merely *an* incarnation of God, as others may be in their place; He is the unique and essential

appearance of God in history. No duplication is conceivable.”⁴⁴ The incarnation was also an event in the life of God: when the eternal God entered time and became subject to its limitations and transience. Describing this remarkable event, however, is problematic, to say the least. How can the eternal God become subject to temporality and still remain eternal? Is there not something so paradoxical in this notion as to render it an unsustainable claim within Christian doctrine? Is it possible to say that one Person of the Trinity assumes the qualities of temporal being without all Persons doing likewise? If one Person of the Trinity is eternal, then all are eternal, and we cannot make the counter-claim that one Person is temporal without all being temporal.

When we examine the doctrine of the incarnation in relation to eternity and time, we are plowing through ground that has been turned over many times in the history of Christian thought. Part of God’s divinity is his eternity, and the earliest Christian councils sought to provide some method of understanding the unity of divinity and humanity in the person of Jesus. Since the Council of Chalcedon in 451, orthodox Western Christians have defended the view that Jesus is consubstantial with the Father in his divinity while at the same time consubstantial with all humanity, yet his divine and human natures are neither changed, confused, divided, nor separated.⁴⁵ The dual natures of humanity and divinity are united in Jesus without either compromising the properties of the other, as J. N. D. Kelly writes: “Side by side with the unity, the Definition states that, as incarnate, the Word exists ‘in two natures’, each complete and each retaining its distinctive properties and operation unimpaired

⁴⁴ Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, 431.

⁴⁵ For more in the history of the debate regarding the two-natures theory within early Christianity, J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 280-343; G. W. H. Lampe, “Christian Theology in the Patristic Period,” in *A History of Christian Doctrine*, ed. Hubert Cunliffe-Jones (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 121-148.

in the union.”⁴⁶ How shall we understand this apparent paradox that the eternal Son of God exists in the temporal person of Jesus?

Many ancient and modern theologians alike throw up their hands in surrender in the face of the mystery of the incarnation. Tertullian acknowledged the incoherence of the logic describing the combination of divinity and humanity in Jesus, but he believed in it despite its absurdity.⁴⁷ Kierkegaard described the notion of humanity and divinity dwelling together in Christ as “a breach with all thinking.”⁴⁸ More recently H. M. Relton has commented regarding the incarnation that “it postulates a logical impossibility...But the Person of Christ is the bankruptcy of human logic.”⁴⁹ Based on his comparative analysis of world religions, John Hick states that it is false to claim that Jesus was the Son of God incarnate.⁵⁰ Christian faith has maintained the belief that in Jesus of Nazareth divinity and humanity became united, despite its logical incoherence and offensiveness to some.

Is there a rationale that allows us to assess this claim and understand what it means for the relation of God to time? If the Son of God became temporal, then it logically follows that God is temporal as well. This claim will further add credence to the assertion that God’s eternity is not timelessness but has the qualities of temporality. Thomas Senor offers a convincing argument for this claim through the following formula of propositions and conclusions:

- P1) Jesus Christ read in the synagogue (at the start of His ministry) before He carried His cross.
- C1) So, temporal predicates apply to Jesus Christ.
- P2) Jesus Christ = God the Son
- C2) So, temporal predicates apply to God the Son.
- P3) Temporal predicates don’t apply to timeless beings.

⁴⁶ J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 341.

⁴⁷ FN Tertullian

⁴⁸ Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscripts*, trans. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), 513.

⁴⁹ H. M. Relton, *A Study in Christology* (London: SPCK, 1917), 265.

⁵⁰ John Hick, *The Myth of God Incarnate* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 178ff.

C3) So, God the Son isn't timeless.⁵¹

Senor's logic breaks down if one denies P2, but since this is one of the fundamental beliefs of Christian orthodoxy it must remain for those who wish to debate God's timelessness within the framework of Christian doctrine. P3 is, as Senor acknowledges, a "conceptual truth", meaning that "a part of what it is to call a being timeless is to say that temporal predicates don't apply to that being."⁵² In other words, temporal descriptions or measurements cannot be used to describe a timeless being. Therefore, the only way to deny Senor's formula is to disprove P1 and the temporal progression of Jesus' human life.

This is the route which is taken by Stump and Kretzman in their essay entitled "Eternity" in which they defend the classical position of God's timelessness.⁵³ Their approach is based on the duality of the divine and human natures in Christ and the preference of one over the other in speaking of events in his life. Thus, temporal descriptions apply only to Jesus in respect to his humanity and not to his divinity. Temporality does not apply to the timeless Son of God. For Stump and Kretzmann, temporal statements regarding the humanity of Jesus are meaningless when applied to the divinity of the Son.⁵⁴ Their argument, however, fails to take into account the seriousness with which the Christian tradition has defended the unity of the dual natures in the one person of Christ. Orthodoxy has maintained that the dual natures are distinct, but they are still joined in the singularity of the person Jesus of Nazareth. It is the unity of the dual natures that requires us to say that if temporal predicates

⁵¹ Thomas Senor, "Incarnation and Timelessness," in *Faith and Philosophy*, v. 7, no. 2, April 1990, 149-162.

⁵² Senor, "Incarnation and Timelessness," 151.

⁵³ Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Eternity," in *The Journal of Philosophy*, v. LXXVII, no. 8, August 1981, 429-58.

⁵⁴ Stump and Kretzmann, "Eternity," 452.

apply to one nature of Christ then they apply to both.⁵⁵ Thus it is logical to claim that the Son of God is temporal through the incarnation. We shall see if it follows to conclude from this that if the Son of God is temporal then the Trinity, i.e. God, is temporal as well and not timeless.

When we look toward the work of our three theologians, we shall examine the nature of the incarnation as an “eschatological event.” Saying this implies that the incarnation involves ramifications for the relation between time and eternity, but there is more involved than that. Our three theologians view Jesus as an eschatological person because his whole life is viewed through the lens of God’s eternal purposes for humankind. God has an eternal desire to exist in communion with human beings, and Jesus Christ is the means through which this desire is realized. There are implications, therefore, for a variety of doctrines, especially the atonement, when one claims that the eternal God lived a temporal life and became subject as he was to death. The manner in which each theologian addresses the incarnation in the eternity/time dialectic reveals how they recast Jesus’ life as an eschatological event.

Each is quick to affirm that the manner of incarnation (how God became human) pales in comparison to its meaning (why God became human), and each is similarly quick to debate the merits and demerits of the traditional Chalcedonian approach to incarnation. For his part, Mackintosh concentrates mostly on the connection between the incarnation and atonement from human sin. This connection is consistent in each of our three theologians, as they commonly desire to link the whole of Christ’s life with God’s atoning sacrifice. Brunner and Moltmann, especially, add the dimension of Christ’s role as messenger and bringer of the kingdom of God to the world. Not only does the incarnation signal God’s desire to

⁵⁵ For an in-depth analysis of this claim, see Thomas Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 46-55.

redeem the world from evil, the incarnation also enables the life of the one who ushers in God's eschatological kingdom on earth. The Christ event possesses eschatological meaning not only in its implications for time and eternity but also because the whole of Christ's life must be viewed in relation to his overall mission of redemption and new life for humanity.⁵⁶

It is humanity's need for redemption that God is responding to in the incarnation of the Logos, and without its eschatological backdrop, any doctrine of the incarnation is woefully incomplete. In addition to this, the ministry of Jesus is vital to appreciating how his life ended the way that it did. The whole of Christ's life has atoning significance, and Christ's death brings atonement only because he lived a perfect, sinless, and obedient human life. The development that we see over the course of the twentieth century is that the incarnation of the Son of God assumes growing eschatological significance, and from the rather one-dimensional linkage of incarnation and atonement in Mackintosh emerges a grand schema which, by the time we reach Moltmann, binds together the whole of creation under the sovereign rule of the Son of God.

The field of Christology was in great flux by the end of the nineteenth century, and orthodox Christology had been undermined by the liberal approach to historical research, which claimed to scrape off layer after layer of the church's doctrinal machinations. One such figment of the church's imagination was to ascribe eternal significance and an "infinite" nature to the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth.⁵⁷ The crucial eschatological concept for Mackintosh regarding the incarnation is the fact that all of history gains its meaning from the Christ event, and for God to have

⁵⁶ For an argument that qualifies and limits this claim, see Hans Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament*, trans. J. Bowden (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 99ff.

⁵⁷ Redman, *Reformulating Reformed Theology*, 27-38.

entered so decisively into world history means that the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history are inseparably linked together. Indeed, Mackintosh's rationale on the incarnation concludes that this doctrine cannot be dismissed as a creation of the church in an attempt to build up a christology around the historical figure of Jesus. The fundamental Christian conviction regarding history is that the eternal God has been decisively revealed through the experience of an historical person. The world is therefore a new place on account of the Son of God's arrival and activity in it. The core meaning of history is the event of reconciliation that was the whole Christ event - his incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection.

Mackintosh finds himself arguing against the assault on Christology from a dogmatic position, most notably that of Adolf Harnack.⁵⁸ Harnack proposed that the early church had wrongly focused its attention toward the two natures theory of Christ's being. For Harnack there is no biblical emphasis on the eternal nature of Christ: it developed out of the doctrinal struggles within the early church. He wanted to see such dogmatic thinking, which he viewed as authoritarian, replaced by a truer, more historically accurate approach to Jesus' identity.⁵⁹ In Harnack's opinion, the church's doctrinal views of Jesus' divinity could not stand the scrutiny of historical criticism, and he therefore challenges much of the creedal assumptions regarding the two-natures person of Christ.⁶⁰ For Harnack, the "kernel" of Christology was comprised of the teachings of the historical Christ and not the church's doctrinal affirmations built up over centuries concerning his divine person.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Much of Mackintosh's thought on incarnation is a response to the work of Adolf Harnack, especially his *What is Christianity?*, trans. Thomas Saunders (New York: Harper, 1957).

⁵⁹ Wilhelm Pauck, *Harnack and Troeltsch: Two Historical Theologians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 34.

⁶⁰ Harnack, *What is Christianity?*, 152 ff.

⁶¹ G. Wayne Click, *The Reality of Christianity: A Study of Adolf von Harnack as Historian and Theologian* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 181ff.

Mackintosh takes exception to Harnack's conclusion that most Christology is historically erroneous and merely a creation of the early church. In fact, in twenty-six references to Harnack in *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, Mackintosh is almost always in disagreement with him. Mackintosh faults Harnack for dismissing christological doctrine too superficially and without truly appreciating the experiences of faith among Christians in the early church.⁶² Mackintosh disagrees with Harnack's conclusion that understanding the development of doctrine is the same as disproving the truth that lies behind that doctrine. Exposing the development of doctrine does not invalidate the faith from which the doctrine grew, and Mackintosh believes that the church's affirmation of Jesus' divinity emerged out of the church's genuine and heartfelt belief in it.

Mackintosh worked also in an era when scholarship was heavily influenced by the "History of Religions" school of thought, which assumed that Christianity is a religion of numerous ideas incorporated from various surrounding religions in the ancient world, especially in regard to incarnation. In biblical scholarship this idea was advanced mostly by the work of Wellhausen and Pfleiderer.⁶³ In systematic theology, this view is voiced mainly by Troeltsch, whose book *The Absoluteness of Christianity* abandons the idea of Jesus' divinity on the grounds that nothing historical could ever be "absolute."⁶⁴ Troeltsch argues that all religious ideas are part of a continuum, and therefore all ideas are historically conditioned and dependent upon their context and place in history. Over time Christianity assumed aspects that are inherent in all religions, and therefore nothing absolutely unique can be claimed

⁶² Mackintosh, *Person of Jesus Christ*, 29; 126.

⁶³ Julius Wellhausen, *Die Christliche Religion* (Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1906). Otto Pfleiderer, *The Early Christian Conception of Christ* (New York: Putnam, 1905); *The Development of Christianity*, trans. David Huebsch (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1910).

⁶⁴ Ernst Troeltsch, *The Absoluteness of Christianity and the History of Religions*, trans. David Reid (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1971).

regarding the identity of Jesus -- he is relative to the development of human religious belief.

The problem with the History of Religions school is that it starts from the presumption that orthodox christology was erroneous for regarding Christ with eternal significance.⁶⁵ Troeltsch denies the concept of unique revelation that traditional christology grants to Christ, and he faults Christian doctrine for attaching divine attributes to the person of Jesus through the two natures formula, thus making Jesus into someone he was not. Mackintosh, in contrast, approaches the incarnation from the very different view that Jesus was absolutely unique in person and work. Jesus cannot be explained in the same manner that other people and events can be historically analyzed. Like previous attempts to dismiss the uniqueness Christ, one would have to ignore the faith and christology of the early church.

Much of Mackintosh's work is aimed at closing the perceived gap that existed in both the History of Dogma and History of Religions schools between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, especially in regard to the time/eternity conundrum surrounding the incarnation. These schools used historical inquiry as a rationale for discarding many aspects of christology on the grounds that the doctrine of the Son's divinity is a human creation and should be divorced from the real, historical person of Jesus. It is at this juncture between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith that Mackintosh saw nineteenth century theology take a wrong turn. Many of the scholars who investigated the historical Jesus failed to make the connection between history and faith, and from a disinterested point of view, they discounted the faith of the New Testament writers and the revelation to them of Christ's identity. For many modern

⁶⁵ Mackintosh, "The Liberal Conception of Jesus in Its Strengths and Weaknesses," *American Journal of Theology* 16 (1912): 410-425.

scholars, Jesus was simply another figure from an ancient religion surrounded by zealous followers who concocted his miraculous existence to augment his reputation.

Mackintosh formulates his christology in response to the Chalcedonian formula of the person of Christ, and although he expresses dissatisfaction with the terminology of the traditional doctrine, he acknowledges that theology cannot easily displace it in favor of other concepts. Mackintosh displays an amazing breadth of thought on the historical grasp of the two natures theory from early church history through the Reformation. In fact, much of the bulk of the early chapters of *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ* is consumed by his deliberations on the people and events through which the church's position on the person of Christ came to be. Mackintosh is well aware of all the debates that raged in the midst of the councils from Nicaea to Chalcedon, and he documents the nuances at stake for the church and doctrine as the formula of Christ's two natures emerged from history.

Mackintosh's method of confronting the divorce between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith is to argue that the incarnation is consistent with God's continuing relationship with humanity even from before the life of Jesus. Prior to the incarnation, it was God's prerogative to commune with human beings within the parameters of history. God has been immanently involved in creation, and the incarnation signifies God's *absolute immanence* within the world. The life of Christ is the last and highest form of God's continual indwelling with that which he has made: "We see God as it were ever on His way to incarnation, moving on by new accesses of self-communication, approaching always nearer to complete personal union, in creation and prophecy and redemption... The Logos, now manifest in Jesus, is but a name for the one God as He ever goes forth to the world in self-revealing act."⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, 434-435.

Jesus is the ideal realization of the confluence of God's movement toward humanity and humanity's receptivity of God. God's immanence reaches its climax in Jesus, and by doing so it reveals the will of God for human love, holiness, and redemption. For Mackintosh, there can be no doubt that the fullness of God dwelt in the humanity of Christ, and this fullness is revealed in Jesus' life of love and holiness toward both God and humanity.

Given the assertion that Jesus is truly God incarnate, the main problem for the doctrine of incarnation is how to state the union of divinity and humanity in Jesus.⁶⁷ In addressing this problem, Mackintosh offers insight into the recovery of kenotic christology, by which he states that God's assumption of human flesh is a sign of God's power and not weakness.⁶⁸ The limitations to which Jesus' life was subject define the power of God and not which attributes Jesus gave up to become human. The kenosis of the Son of God implies a powerful decision on God's part to love humanity perfectly from within creation: "The Son must empty Himself in order that from within mankind He may declare the Father's name, offer the great sacrifice, triumph over death; and the reality with which, to reach this end, He laid aside the form and privilege of deity is the measure of that love which had throbbed in the Divine heart from all eternity."⁶⁹ With a thoroughly kenotic approach to the incarnation, Mackintosh is able to cast the traditional understandings of divine impassability and unchangeableness in a new light. God's love for humanity is immutable, but the power of this love allows God to undergo change on humanity's behalf through the incarnation.

⁶⁷ "Traditional christology, on the whole, has found [this] too much to believe. Its persistent obscuration of Jesus' real manhood proves that after all it shrank from the thought of a true "kinsman Redeemer" -- one of ourselves in flesh and spirit." Mackintosh, *Person of Jesus Christ*, 467.

⁶⁸ Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, 446.

⁶⁹ Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, 470.

Since the arguments in church history regarding incarnation centered around the two "natures" of Christ, his divinity and his humanity, Mackintosh proposes that the nature of God in Christ must be understood primarily as moral. It is the moral nature of Christ in which divinity and humanity find unity and not through such concepts as omniscience and omnipotence.⁷⁰ In Christ, God embodies divine love, and in Christ humanity finds the fullest expression of obedience to God and love of others. The categories of omniscience and omnipotence are less important than the categories of holiness and love, which are the sign of Jesus' true divinity and humanity. God's nature is to love, and humanity's nature is meant also for love. In Jesus these two natures are perfectly manifested. He lived intimately with the Father, and he displayed the Father's love for human beings. He lived a perfect human life toward God, "perfect Love and Holiness and Freedom in terms of perfect humanity."⁷¹ It is in this way that the doctrine of the two natures should be understood.

The outworking of these beliefs is seen in the continual battle Mackintosh fights to affirm the historical being of Christ, as opposed to more philosophical views in modern theology that denied the true historicity of the incarnate God. For example Fichte claims that it is impossible to demand faith in the historic Christ if Christ truly was God.⁷² According to Fichte, if Christ is "absolute," i.e. divine, then he cannot be conditioned by events in time; he must rather be above and beyond all the transient elements of temporality. To be subject to events in time means that one is captive to the progressive sweep of history and unable to rise above it in any meaningful way.

⁷⁰ For a similar appeal to the moral nature of kenosis, see P. T. Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ* (London: Wyman & Sons, Ltd., 1909), 300.

⁷¹ Mackintosh, *Person of Jesus Christ*, 486.

⁷² Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Foundations of Natural Right: According to the Principles of the Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. Frederick Neuhouser, trans. Michael Baur (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Faith must be based on something larger than and transcendent above the historical process.⁷³ If Christ is absolute and eternal then he cannot be changed by any events within time. How can the absolute God appear in a time and in a place and remain transcendent? Fichte believes that nothing absolute, including the eternal Son of God, can be mediated through events in time because all historical events are transitory and fleeting.

Mackintosh counters this line of thought by arguing that the incarnation changes what we perceive as the Absoluteness of God. The incarnation demonstrates how notions of transcendence and infinitude are compatible with immanence and limitation, contrary to philosophy's understanding of the same principles. For Mackintosh absolute being includes "the human life of God" in the incarnation. Since history is the domain in which God realizes the divine goal for creation, then history must be fully capable of containing the creative will and the actions of an absolute God. "It is in history, and only there, that the infinite love of the Eternal is put within our reach and we are made certain of it as a person and inalienable possession."⁷⁴ Therefore, historical events are not fleeting and must figure decisively in the relationship between God and humanity. The incarnation makes possible a relationship for humanity in the love of God: "What has been realized in Him is not simply more than the past, measured backward from His advent; it is likewise more than all the future: for through him is mediated now and for ever that union with God which is salvation and blessedness."⁷⁵ Thus, the life of Jesus serves as the core of history, and all historical events revolve around his appearance in history.

The change in the relationship between God and humanity through Christ displays the eschatological framework around his life, which signifies the link

⁷³ Fichte, *Foundations of Natural Right*, 47.

⁷⁴ Mackintosh, *Person of Jesus Christ*, 307.

⁷⁵ Mackintosh, *Person of Jesus Christ*, 436.

between incarnation and atonement. Mackintosh follows within the history of Scottish Calvinism in viewing the incarnation as a prelude to atonement, and the whole life of Christ must be treated with as much significance as his death.⁷⁶ Jesus' entire life has atoning significance, and atonement is wrought through Christ's filial relationship to the will of God as well as his obedient sacrifice on the cross. The incarnation has eschatological meaning because it is part of God's overarching purpose to redeem humanity from its sin: "The history of theology proves to the hilt that the great ideas of Atonement and Incarnation lose the lifeblood of meaning when they drift apart from each other."⁷⁷ By affirming the atoning significance of Christ's incarnation and life, Mackintosh's thought resonates with previous lines of Scottish theology, mainly that of John McLeod Campbell, who preceded Mackintosh by about fifty years. One of McLeod Campbell's primary concerns is to maintain the link between Christ's life and death – between his human nature, his ministry, and his death on the cross.⁷⁸ While not sharing all of McLeod Campbell's view on the universality of atonement through Christ, Mackintosh frequently argues for the understanding that Christ's death was consonant with his whole life, and that his death must be interpreted in light of his life.

This emphasis on the incarnation of the Son and his life as Jesus Christ emphasizes the linkage between incarnation and atonement. Rather than drawing a divider between his incarnation and death, the two events must be understood as operating as two events within the one redemptive cause of God: his death is the

⁷⁶ Robert Redman offers an analysis of the link between incarnation and atonement in Scottish theology from the Reformation through the 19th century. See Redman, *Reformulating Reformed Theology*, 69-77.

⁷⁷ Mackintosh, *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1927), 208.

⁷⁸ See John McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996); see also J. B. Torrance, "The Contribution of McCleod Campbell to Scottish Theology," in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 26 (1973): 295-311; G. M. Tuttle, *So Rich A Soil: John McCleod Campbell on Christian Atonement* (Edinburgh: Handsel Pres, 1986).

result of his obedient life. Mackintosh explains that there can be no separation between incarnation and atonement because

there is no rivalry between a tree-stem and its fruit, for each is only as related to and determined by the other; so the Incarnation and the Atonement, the person and the work of Christ, have concrete and intelligible reality only as they constitute and define each other in the unity of a single experience. Life exhibits no break or cleft disserving the two; in Jesus Christ supremely being and doing are one.⁷⁹

The mission of Christ is directly associated with the conquest of sin, which puts the incarnation of God on an eschatological plane.⁸⁰

The element in Mackintosh' assessment of the incarnation that will be magnified later in the twentieth century is the understanding of the divine pathos that God has toward human beings. It is God's solidarity with humanity through the incarnation that gives this doctrine a connection to the eternal love that God has for men and women. Mackintosh eloquently states that the result of incarnation is Christ's complete oneness with humanity to the degree that Christ suffers for all human sin. The incarnation displays God's willingness to take upon himself human life and death so that this suffering life becomes part of the experience of God's own being.⁸¹ What Mackintosh begins with this understanding of divine pathos will be enhanced by both Brunner and Moltmann in the ensuing years.

Writing as he did in the middle years of the twentieth century, Brunner addresses several of the same challenges to modern theology that Mackintosh does, and yet his own context brought a host of new views regarding the relationship between eschatology and christology. *The Mediator* is one of Brunner's earlier works, and this made him an intellect to be reckoned with in theology. It is his primary effort

⁷⁹ Mackintosh, *Person of Jesus Christ*, 343.

⁸⁰ Mackintosh, *Person of Jesus Christ*, 441.

⁸¹ Mackintosh, *Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, 205-206.

in regard to christology, although he would continue to develop his thought on the person of Christ throughout his career. Even though *The Mediator* is part of his early work as a theologian, it is nevertheless profound in its prolific study of Christ. In it he strives, above all else, to illustrate how God's revelation in Jesus is uniquely absolute - in an objective sense to the whole world and in a subjective way to the individual through faith. The centrality of Christ for all doctrine is seen in his insistence that doctrinal discussions, including that of eschatology, start with Jesus Christ, who is the climactic and perfect revelation of God's self and God's will for creation. Brunner's concept of God's revelation is based on the person of Jesus because his ministry, death, and resurrection are bound to specific places and times, and the events of his life form the heart of history. Brunner continually places great emphasis on the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as God's revelation to humanity because, like Mackintosh, Brunner found himself arguing against those who denied historical uniqueness of the revelation of Jesus Christ.⁸²

Brunner casts the incarnation of the Son of God in an eschatological light by emphasizing that the incarnation is part of the larger event of redemption that can be understood only within its eschatological parameters. The incarnation is a revelation of the personality of God, a God who is known to be a personal God who acts within time and history in a continual movement toward humanity.⁸³ Jesus is absolutely unique because he is the decisive and highest revelation of God's personal being. This particularity of Jesus is crucial for Brunner's eschatology because it is through Christ's life, death, and resurrection that humanity is able to believe in its own movement toward an eschatological goal. That human history has a goal given by

⁸² Tetsutaro Ariga, "Jesus of History and Christ of Faith," in *The Theology of Emil Brunner*, 157-175.

⁸³ The title of chapter 10 in Brunner's *The Mediator*, "The Self-Movement of God," is indicative of his view of God's continual involvement toward creation on a personal level.

God is one of Brunner's primary points, and human beings are able to apprehend this goal only as it is revealed by God through the life of Christ. For this reason, the historical events of Jesus' life must be understood eschatologically, or, in other words, as they reveal the goal that God wills for humanity and creation.

Like Mackintosh before him, Brunner struggles with the church's classical doctrine of the two natures. Much of the perplexity regarding Jesus' identity harkens back to the early church's difficulties in affirming the mysterious truth that Jesus was "true God and true man." The early church's battles over the doctrine of the two natures of Christ were an outpouring of effort to define precisely who Jesus was in his historical and extra-historical person, and the church realized that it had to affirm his divinity at the same time as his humanity. The Chalcedonian formula is one that tries to hold together several contradictions regarding the person of Jesus. The Son is eternal, and yet he has entered temporality. Jesus is morally perfect, yet he is a human being like everyone else, a fact which necessarily means sinfulness. Jesus is divine but also human. When theology speaks of Jesus, in the same breath it describes the Eternal Son and the Divine Logos as well as a human being in history like everyone else. Such statements naturally lead to confusion.

Unfortunately, Brunner does little to ease this confusion in that he repeatedly and adamantly refuses to enunciate how the eternal God could assume temporality, and this is quite a deficiency in his theology. He regularly chalks it up to the "mystery" of incarnation without trying to solve it in a logical way. He states the problem thusly: "Must not every attempt to define the 'togetherness' of divinity and humanity in the Person of Jesus break down? Is it not a fact, that all such attempts, of whatever kind, are disastrous, because they inevitably lead man to go further than is

allowable in trying to transcend the limitations of human thought?"⁸⁴ The classical formula is an attempt to place the two irreconcilable concepts of eternity and temporality within the identity of the person Jesus, and how this is possible Brunner will do little more than speculate.⁸⁵

To describe the mystery without explaining it, Brunner returns to the apostolic witness in scripture to say that in the man Jesus, people had encountered God. Yet he also excoriates the Chalcedonian attempt to distinguish what in Jesus is divine and what is specifically human. Brunner seeks to breathe new life into the traditional understanding of the two natures of Christ as determined by the early church in the councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon. Brunner seems particularly concerned to address the shortcomings of the classical "true God, true man" formula of the doctrine of the two natures because he does not believe that the Chalcedonian formula fully resonates with the modern doctrine of either God or humanity. He cannot, however, dismiss certain aspects of Chalcedon which are fundamental to christology:

Once we begin to think in abstract terms of the *schema* of the Two Natures, then we cannot hold the unity of the divine-human Person save through the denial of the duality, thus through the assertion of the unity of the divine nature. But why need we think in such abstractions? How do they help us to understand the true, insoluble mystery, that at this one point in the world and in history it is true that the borderline between the Creator and the creature has been crossed, that from the standpoint of natural knowledge, there is a human creature who is God, and that it pleased God to identify Himself with a definite, localized finite given entity, with the historical Person Jesus of Nazareth?...I do not feel myself in a position to do this, and at the present time I have no cause to complain of this incapacity, since I must suppose that every so-called "solution" would only raise further difficulties.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 358.

⁸⁵ "It will be sufficient for us to say that the order of knowledge – that in the historical Revealer, we know the Eternal Son of God – corresponds to an order of being, which goes in the opposite direction: that the Eternal Son became man, that He who is from everlasting entered into human history, that it is precisely this entrance into history which constitutes the basis of His threefold work. All that goes further than this is useless speculation." Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 351-352.

⁸⁶ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 362.

Raising the complex question of the two natures doctrine is simply asking questions about something that cannot be logically fathomed by our human minds. For Brunner it is enough to see that the New Testament writers believed that in Jesus God had chosen to live a human life. He is dissatisfied with the early church's desire to move beyond this biblical assertion into the "natures" or essence of Jesus' personhood.⁸⁷

Brunner's disdain for the doctrine of the two natures manifests itself particularly in his view of the virgin birth of Jesus, which he denies. In the least, Brunner claims that the virgin birth is inconsequential to the New Testament witness of Jesus as the Son of God. It is not part of the main confession of Jesus' personhood, and Brunner sees a contradiction between John's prologue and the Matthew and Luke accounts of Jesus' virgin birth. The virgin birth does not belong to the *kerygma* of the New Testament church, and "thus we must assume, either, that the Apostles were unaware of this view, or, that they considered it unimportant, or even mistaken... The view which is often suggested, that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is a special protection for the central doctrine of the New Testament, the doctrine of the Incarnation, is obviously wrong."⁸⁸ Brunner further doubts that Jesus could be considered truly human if he did not have a human father and that theology asserts that Jesus is the Eternal Son of God in spite of and not on account of the Matthew and Luke narratives of Jesus' birth.

Rather than bind the eschatological Jesus to the two nature theory of the incarnation through the virgin birth, Brunner links incarnation and eschatology by showing what the incarnation reveals about God's eschatological purposes for

⁸⁷ Like Brunner, G. C. Berkouwer recognizes the modern crisis for Christology surrounding the two natures theory of the person of Christ. For more, see his *The Person of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 21-55.

⁸⁸ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 354.

humanity. Through the incarnation the relatively unique field of human history and the absolutely unique field of salvation history coincided when the Word of God became flesh, and the fusion of temporality and eternity in Christ has altered forever humanity's relation to God. History and time gained an eternal dimension, which was previously unknown until the Word of God became an historical event.⁸⁹ The temporal and the eternal coalesce inseparably and completely in Christ because the relative and the absolute aspects of history are united in the person of Jesus, who himself has both a relative and an absolute history.

The eschatological significance of the incarnation mainly involves Brunner's overall concept of revelation, and it is at this point that he is similar to Mackintosh. For both, the incarnation is the pinnacle of God's revelation toward humanity. It is the fullest expression of the divine will for human life, and the incarnation issues the ultimate personal correspondence from God to humanity. Brunner goes so far as to say that the concept of personal encounter is the crux of the biblical message, and Jesus Christ is God's way of personally encountering human beings.⁹⁰

Personal encounter can occur only between two subjects in a face to face encounter, and the encounter between God and humanity reached its most personal stake in Jesus. He is "the communication, the self-communication of God; it is He Himself in whom God proclaims and realizes His will to Lordship and His will to fellowship.... The incarnation of the Word, the entrance of God into the sphere of our

⁸⁹ Brunner, *The Mediator*, 308. This compares to Barth's contention that "the fact that the Word became flesh undoubtedly means that, without ceasing to be eternity, in its very power as eternity, eternity became time. Yes, it became time...If this is so, from this standpoint too we cannot understand God's eternity as pure timelessness." Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II/1, 616.

⁹⁰ "The relation of personal correspondence, which we found to be the basic category of Biblical thinking and placed in contradistinction to the general understanding of truth, has conclusively proved itself to be at the center of Biblical faith in a primary and decisive examination of justification by faith alone." Brunner, *The Divine-Human Encounter*, trans. Amandus Loos, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1943), 76. The personal nature of God's revelation is the subject of Brunner's work entitled *Revelation and Reason: the Christian Doctrine of Faith and Knowledge*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946), 50 ff.

life, the self-manifestation of God in His Son – this is the real revelation, the basis for Lordship, and the means of establishing fellowship.”⁹¹ Brunner’s overall theological project depends greatly on this concept of personal encounter between God and humanity through the incarnation. Therefore it follows that the incarnation as personal encounter would take on great importance in the expanding scope of eschatological thought. The incarnation of the eternal Word of God in the historical event of the life of Jesus Christ served the primary purpose of showing the eschatological, eternal intent that God holds for human beings.⁹² God intended an eternal relationship between humanity and God, and in the incarnation of the Son this intent of God is recognized.

Like Mackintosh before him, Brunner emphasizes the vital importance of the incarnation by linking it with the concept of atonement. Atonement for sin does not begin with Jesus’ death on the cross. Rather, it is the whole of Christ’s life, including his ministry of teaching and healing, that God uses to atone for a lost creation:

Thus when we speak of the "Person" and "the Work" of the Mediator we mean exactly the same thing. He Himself, because He is what He is, *is* the Revelation and Atonement. We do not need to posit Christ as the subject of a transaction in order to speak of His work. If we speak rightly of His Person, in accordance with His Nature, we also bear witness to His work of revelation and atonement. He *is* what He does and *does* what He is, and both these statements mean that He reunites man, who is separated, indeed practically severed from his divine origin, with God. He is a Person, because and in so far as His being a Person is, as such, already God's reconciling act.⁹³

All of Jesus’ actions reveal the love of God reaching out to offer reconciliation and forgiveness to sinful humanity. Jesus is God’s act of effecting forgiveness of sin, and God’s forgiveness for humanity begins with Jesus’ forgiveness for sinners during his

⁹¹ Brunner, *The Divine-Human Encounter*, 77.

⁹² Brunner, *The Mediator*, 291ff.

⁹³ Brunner, *The Mediator*, 490.

ministry. The person of Jesus Christ is known through his work, i.e. that who he is as God must be known first through his saving work as humanity's redeemer.⁹⁴

Brunner adds an eschatological dimension that Mackintosh lacks through his reliance on Adamic christology, which provides another avenue for Brunner to argue in favor of humanity's lost and restored eschatological existence through the incarnation. Here we see how Brunner relies on Kierkegaard for his understanding of the solidarity of humanity in relation to God. Kierkegaard writes that "the essential characteristic of human existence, that man is an individual and as such is at once himself and the whole race, in such wise that the whole race has part in the individual, and the individual has part in the whole race."⁹⁵ Brunner's intent in his use of this Kierkegaardian concept is to build an argument for Christ's role as the Mediator who reconciles humanity to God and God to humanity.

The incarnation reveals the solidarity of humanity in that a person does not exist in isolation apart from the rest of humanity, and humanity receives its identity from its relationship with God.⁹⁶ By emphasizing the solidarity of humanity before God, Brunner is denying the Enlightenment's elevation of the individual at the expense of humanity. The result of Enlightenment thinking was to sever the connection between individuals and to isolate them apart from an all-inclusive human nature.⁹⁷ Contrary to Enlightenment isolation, Adam and Christ serve as typological

⁹⁴ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 271ff.

⁹⁵ Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Dread*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 26.

⁹⁶ "The isolated individual is an abstraction, conceived by the reason which has been severed from the Word of God. 'The other' is not added to my nature after my nature, after I myself, as this particular individual, have been finished. But the other, the others, are interwoven with my nature. I am not man at all apart from others. I am not 'I' apart from the 'Thou'. As I cannot be a human being without a relation to God, without the Divine 'Thou', so also I cannot be man without the human 'Thou'. Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 141.

⁹⁷ For a critique of Brunner's use of Kierkegaard, see M. Colin Grant, "The Power of the Unrecognized 'Blik': Adam and Humanity according to Søren Kierkegaard and Emil Brunner," in *Sciences Religieuses/Studies in Religion*, 7/1 (1978): 47-52.

representations of humanity in Brunner's soteriology, and all humanity is included under the rubric of the two Adams.⁹⁸ The life of the second Adam, Christ, reveals that the life of the first Adam is an existence unto death. In addition, all human beings (all Adams) stand together, united in solidarity through their sin.

Christ's life discloses each person's responsibility for guilt and sin, and the Son of God opens humanity's eyes so that each person may recognize his own history in Adam.⁹⁹ Each individual's sin is part of the past sin of all humanity, and in the present one is corrupted by the sin and guilt which is collectively shared by humanity. The individual recognizes that his fate is bound up with the fate of all humanity, which is, in the end, death. Through the second Adam, the first Adam discerns the inevitable eschatological consequences of human sin. The result of humanity's guilt is that each Adam is weighed down with an unbearable burden because anxiety and sorrow accompany the expectation of death, which is the end in store for humanity. It is only in the light of Christ that people can know that "Adam" is a symbolic representation of all humanity and each person, and each individual's story is also that of Adam and vice-versa. The second Adam is also a representative of humanity, but in a different sense from the first. Jesus, as the second Adam, is a literal figure of history, unlike the first. The second Adam serves to recapitulate every Adam before the God who was wronged and offended by every Adam's sin.¹⁰⁰ Brunner relies on christological assumptions of Jesus as the second Adam who alters human eschatology and who issues in the kingdom of God's universal rule. Through the second Adam, God moves toward all humanity, and consequently to each individual, and in this movement each person is restored to his or her right relationship with God.

⁹⁸ Brunner, *The Mediator*, 497.

⁹⁹ See Romans 5:12-17.

¹⁰⁰ Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 377.

Brunner moves beyond Mackintosh also by strengthening the connection between incarnation and atonement by elaborating on how the incarnation signals the rule and reign of God's kingdom in the world. Brunner chooses to describe the significance of incarnation by drawing on the Reformed understanding of Christ as prophet, priest, and king, although for Brunner it is primarily through the prophetic office that he sees the most eschatological significance for the incarnation. Brunner ties the priestly and kingship roles of Jesus to atonement and resurrection, and it is in the prophetic office that Brunner details the significance of the incarnation as an eschatological event.

Jesus fulfilled the role of eschatological prophet by making known the will of God through proclamation and teaching, and primarily he preaches about the advent of the kingdom of God. When Jesus arrived on the scene it was clear that he taught with authority, and that he proclaimed a message of the kingdom that went beyond what other rabbis and prophets said. Jesus was an eschatological prophet because he proclaimed something radically new about the will of God, and the truth he taught was "derived from the super-human sphere."¹⁰¹ Unlike previous prophets who announced the future of the kingdom, Jesus is the immediate revelation of God. In fact, with Jesus comes the dawn of a new era, and he personally brings in the kingdom of God.¹⁰² Previous prophets had the Word of God given to them, but Jesus himself is the Word of God. What he says points to himself and to the kingdom he ushers in. Other prophets can only point to the kingdom as servants of Word of God, whereas in

¹⁰¹ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 275.

¹⁰² Jesus is the highest and final self-disclosure of God, and therefore the end of history is anticipated in him. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Dogmatic Theses on the Doctrine of Revelation," in *Revelation as History*, ed. Wolfhart Pannenberg, trans. D. Granskou (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 134.

Jesus the Word and the servant are one. As an eschatological prophet, Jesus himself embodies the message that God's kingdom has arrived on earth.¹⁰³

For Brunner, the incarnation holds such enormous eschatological significance because it is only through the human Christ that God brings about his kingdom and rule. As a prophet Jesus points to the new reality that has come through his presence, and there is no other means by which God inaugurates his rule: "In His action, in His life, in His sufferings and in His death He brings in the Kingdom, and is the representative of the Kingdom. In Him we see what it is, and through Him it becomes real to us. The Kingdom is not 'something' but it is God's Presence in person. The Kingdom is where Jesus is, and if He is not present, the Kingdom is not present."¹⁰⁴ Brunner regards Christ as both the revealer and the content of God's kingdom, and in this way he is the eschatological prophet of God – because he is the kingdom's personal representative. This type of christology clearly moves in a direction similar to Moltmann as Brunner argues for Jesus' role in inaugurating a new era of God's kingdom on earth.¹⁰⁵

Moltmann offers the most complete view of how Jesus' entire life, beginning with his incarnation, is an eschatological event. There are similarities in his thought to the theologians of previous years, but Moltmann is more deliberate in carefully connecting Jesus' incarnation to the eschatological purposes of God. With an expansive understanding of the nature of Christ's being, Moltmann says that "to confess Jesus as the Christ of God means perceiving him in his *eschatological person*."

¹⁰³ Jesus message and conduct reveals also his own self-understanding. See Ernst Fuchs, "The Quest of the Historical Jesus," in *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, trans. A. Scobie (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1964), 21-22.

¹⁰⁴ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 280.

¹⁰⁵ "The Christ is the One in whom and through whom God establishes His sovereignty. Christ is characterized not so much by His being as by His function. Whatever else Christ may 'be', in any case He is the One who leads out of the 'present age' into the 'coming age', who ends one period, and ushers in another, who realizes God's rule upon earth." Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v 2, 291.

In him are present Israel's messiah, the Son of man of the nations, and the coming Wisdom of creation itself. He is the kingdom of God in person, and the beginning of the new creation of all things. In this way he is the bearer of hope for the world. In him believers recognize *the messianic human being*."¹⁰⁶ Like Mackintosh and Brunner before him, Moltmann insists that the being of Christ is concurrent with his mission and ministry and that his whole life has atoning significance. His being is primarily eschatological because he not only represents the kingdom of God, he is also in himself the beginning and the manifestation of the kingdom.

In several significant ways, Moltmann expands the scope of twentieth century christology by applying eschatological interpretations to all of the aspects of the person and work of Jesus Christ. With great breadth of thought, Moltmann's christology examines the mission of Christ from a thoroughly eschatological point of view -- from the Son of God's birth to the eschatological resurrection of Jesus and the new age ushered in by it. Moltmann's main goal is to demonstrate how the Son of God's mission is one of eschatological transformation for all creation, and this mission begins through the incarnation.

The title *The Way of Jesus Christ* is illustrative of Moltmann's primary view of Jesus as the Christ who is becoming and who must be understood in light of the eschatological purposes of his ministry in the coming kingdom of God. Moltmann is determined not to trap christology in a static formula like that of Nicaea or Chalcedon, and he yearns to demonstrate a christology "which points beyond itself and draws people toward the future of Christ, so that they remain on Christ's path, and move forward along that path."¹⁰⁷ Christology must reflect the goal of Christ's way from his birth through his baptism and ministry to his crucifixion and resurrection. Any true

¹⁰⁶ Moltmann, *Way of Jesus Christ*, 149.

¹⁰⁷ Moltmann, *Way of Jesus Christ*, xiv.

messianic christology must reflect the ongoing work of Christ in the world as he liberates creation on the way toward the kingdom: "A Christology of the way of Christ will always interpret his way in light of his goal."¹⁰⁸ Moltmann repeats his claim in several places that as the Son of God incarnate, Christ is on the way to his Messianic rule, but he has not arrived at it yet. Moltmann writes:

The earthly -- the crucified -- the raised -- the present -- the coming One: these are the stages of God's eschatological history with Jesus. It is these stages which the title "Christ" gathers together.... If we take this Christ-in-becoming, this Christ on the road, seriously, then we can take up an eschatological distinction that was made in the theology of an earlier time, and say that there can already be a *christologia viae* here and now, but there cannot yet be a *christologia patriae*....The coming One is in the process of his coming and can be grasped only in that light: as on the road, and walking with us. But for that reason every confession of Christ in the history of this unredeemed world has to be understood as a reaching out, an anticipation of the new creation in which every tongue will confess him in the glory of the Father (Phil. 2:11). Every confession of Christ leads to the way, and along the way, and is not yet in itself the goal.¹⁰⁹

This is the means by which Moltmann seeks to move beyond Chalcedonian christology -- by maintaining the continuing development of Christ's being. Christ cannot be contained in a formula that freezes his being so long as he still has promises to fulfill regarding his identity.

The main problem that Moltmann identifies in the doctrine of the two natures is that it diverges from early church affirmations of Christ toward a God of the philosophers with certain preconceived notions of the attributes of God that we have previously mentioned: omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, and impassability. We have already seen Moltmann's disdain for defining God in superlative categories according to what humanity is not. When this happens, discussions of God's attributes move away from describing the personal God who acts in history. Divine

¹⁰⁸ Moltmann, *Way of Jesus Christ*, xv.

¹⁰⁹ Moltmann, *Way of Jesus Christ*, 33.

pathos, which inspires God to intervene on behalf of his people, is neglected in favor of omnipotence and impassability. The two natures theory of the incarnation loses the sense that God is coming to the aid of suffering human beings by becoming a suffering human being himself.

Moltmann frames his discussion of the identity of Jesus by moving in a direction away from the Chalcedonian formula, which deals with Christ's first coming into history. Moltmann believes that God's interaction with the world must be viewed from the eschatological perspective of the *future* coming of Christ. The two natures doctrine is an attempt to explain Christ's identity according to his first coming into the world, and Mackintosh and Brunner are bound to the Chalcedonian formula even as they criticize it. Moltmann sidesteps the issue of Christ's two natures, in a way, by focusing on the future coming of Christ. The past event of incarnation is only part of the larger, continuing movement of Christ, so that his incarnation is an event on the way to his Lordship.

Moltmann believes that to appreciate the meaning of incarnation one ought first to appreciate how Jesus fulfilled Messianic expectations through his life and ministry and not simply from the manner in which he was born. For Moltmann this means understanding Jesus as the Son of God who grows into his messianic role over the course of his life. Moltmann progresses this line of reasoning by offering, in his words, "a richer, fuller portrait of the person of Jesus Christ" by claiming that Jesus grows into his role as Messiah. As Bauckham points out, this provisionality of Jesus' messianic identity is revealed in the structure of Moltmann's *The Way of Jesus Christ*. The book mostly parallels stages along the way of Christ's life instead of dealing with the classical theological discussions about such things as the divine-human unity of

Christ.¹¹⁰ The structure of this book poses an interesting contrast to Mackintosh's *Person of Jesus Christ*, in which he re-visits much of the history of christological debate before offering his own interpretation of the two natures.

Grounding his perspective in the Jewish concept of Messianic expectation, Moltmann illustrates how Jesus fulfills these eschatological expectations by his way of life. One gains a sense of how Jesus assumed his role as the eschatological Messiah only through examining his relationships and his interactions with God and others: "Jesus does not possess the Messiahship; he grows into it, as it were, since he is molded by the events of the messianic time which he experiences. These events find their completion in him through the sufferings of the new Servant of God and the birth pangs of the new creation."¹¹¹ Emphasizing messianic hope as the impetus for the incarnation moves Moltmann beyond our two previous theologians in linking Jesus' incarnation with Old Testament expressions of eschatological hope. While the previous two appreciate the Old Testament foundation for a coming messiah, Moltmann makes the category of Old Testament messianic expectation the primary means of defining the Son's incarnation. If the identity of Jesus as the Christ is to be truly understood, then it must be as he reveals himself as an eschatological Messiah who relates not only to humanity but also to the whole of creation.¹¹²

Moltmann labors to reclaim the Jewish parameters of messianic hope as they surround Jesus, and Jewish conceptions of messianic hope are the foundation of his understanding of Jesus' eschatological mission as the Christ of God. The Christ is Israel's Messiah, and "of course Christian messianology takes its impress from the unique figure of Jesus, his message and his special divine history. But we must

¹¹⁰ Bauckham, *Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, 199-202.

¹¹¹ Moltmann, *Way of Jesus Christ*, 139.

¹¹² Bauckham, *Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, 205-206.

always have in mind the Old Testament and Israel's history, in which Jesus lived and which is the source of his theological significance as 'the Christ.'"¹¹³ Moltmann links Christians and Jews in their common hope for a Messiah, and he claims that Christian hope for the Messiah springs from its Jewish roots.

In *The Way of Jesus Christ*, Moltmann continues many trends which were begun in his earlier work, especially *Theology of Hope* and *The Crucified God*, yet there are significant additions and changes on Moltmann's behalf. In *Theology of Hope*, Moltmann relies heavily on the Old Testament theology of God's promise as it was manifested in the incarnation of Jesus.¹¹⁴ In *The Way of Jesus Christ*, Moltmann builds on this theme while also adding a dimension on the role of the Holy Spirit in linking Jesus with the divine Logos/Wisdom of God. It is the Spirit of God who forms the bridge between the pre-incarnate Word of God and Jesus as the Christ of God whose life, death, and resurrection usher in the new creation. In this way Moltmann is able to strengthen the linkage between the Old Testament theology of promise and Jesus as the Christ. In *The Way of Jesus Christ* Moltmann proposes what he terms as a more holistic Christology by presenting the eschatological history of Christ from the divine Logos' purpose in the pre-incarnate state through the life of Jesus Christ through the expectation of his future parousia. This angle on Christology prevents a doctrinal split between the Messiah who fulfills the Old Testament promise and the coming Lord in parousia who fulfills the New Testament promise.

The Son's pre-incarnate role in creation is a category by which Moltmann advances on the work of Brunner by leaps and bounds, and Moltmann's views on the christological implications of the Word as Mediator of creation are thoroughly eschatological. Even though Brunner dedicates the first portion of the second volume

¹¹³ Moltmann, *Way of Jesus Christ*, 1.

¹¹⁴ See Christopher Morse, *The Logic of Promise in Moltmann's Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 83.

of his dogmatics to the doctrine of creation, he does not delve into the understanding of creation through the Word of God. Mackintosh attempts to draw some conclusions regarding the perplexities of the “pre-existence of the Son of God,” but he does not deal with Christ’s role in creation as part of this discussion.¹¹⁵ Only Moltmann offers an extended appreciation for the eschatological connection between creation and incarnation.¹¹⁶

Moltmann's understanding of the eschatological nature of Christology stands out prominently also in his doctrine of creation because he views creation and its eschatological renewal as events that are solidly grounded in the person of the Word of God. All creation is the act of the one God through his divine Wisdom/Logos, by which creation is held together in its unity. The unity of creation in God's being is symbolized in the Biblical witness of creation through the divine Word and the presence of the Spirit of God.¹¹⁷ The Word and Spirit of God work together to give creation its unity through form and function: "We therefore have to say that God creates all things through his defining and differentiating Word in the primordial vibrances of the Spirit... In the unity of created things, Word and Spirit complement one another. The Word specifies and differentiates through its efficacy; the Spirit binds and creates symmetries, harmonies and concord through its presence."¹¹⁸ The Word as the mediator of creation must be coupled with the Spirit through which God indwells and sustains what the Word has spoken into existence. The eschatological Christ is the ground of existence for all of creation.¹¹⁹

What this means for Moltmann's eschatological Jesus is that there is a link between creation, incarnation, redemption, and consummation, and so there is a

¹¹⁵ Mackintosh, *Person of Jesus Christ*, 445ff.

¹¹⁶ Bauckham, *Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, 187ff.

¹¹⁷ Moltmann, *Way of Jesus Christ*, 288.

¹¹⁸ Moltmann, *Way of Jesus Christ*, 289.

¹¹⁹ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 94.

continuity of Christ's work from start to finish. In the creation of all, of which the Son played an integral part, everything received God's approval and blessing. The incarnation of the Son reveals God's continuing approval of humanity despite its sinfulness. The creating act of the Word exists not only in the beginning, but also in an ongoing relationship with creation through its preservation. God patiently preserves creation while always looking forward to its consummation in the kingdom of his glory. Throughout creation's existence, God has maintained his original stance of favor and grace toward it, even with the reality of evil and creatures who contradict God's will. God's preservation of and participation in the world through the Word is oriented toward its recreation as a new world in the consummation of God's kingdom. The Word of God remains as the mediator by which God enacts creation's new liberation and redemption. Moltmann is able to maintain his stance on the ongoing role of the Word as Mediator by stating that creation was not a once and for all event. Rather, creation is a process which always remains open to God. Through the divine Word, God always creates something new and continues to develop what has been created.

Chapter Four

Redefining Time: The Future

Christians hope for certain events to happen in the future, but are they really in the future, or are they beyond the future and time itself? Here our experience of a dynamic reality and our language of tense run into obstacles.¹ How do we speak of events that we anticipate in the future but that are not future events *in time*? If they are not temporal events, then what are they and how are they related to time? Are events in the eschatological future related to all of time and tense – past, present, and future alike? This chapter focuses on pronouncements of Christian theology regarding the eschatological future, which means that we will be relying on the vocabulary of tense in many ways, some of which may prove unsatisfactory. The eschatological future is future, because it has not yet been realized, yet it is also eschatological, because it is dealing with matters beyond time.

Eschatological hope is problematic because it is dependent on symbolic apocalyptic language and visions in scripture that are not easily compatible with a scientific view of nature and reality. When speaking of the eschatological future -- Christ's parousia, final judgment, and the consummation of God's glorious kingdom - - our tensed approach to dynamic reality breaks down. We cannot speak of these events as if they will occur in a series, one after the other, because their occurrence will be simultaneous. We are speaking of events that transcend time and are viewed by our theologians as such. In this chapter we will see what views of time and eternity are relied upon in the views of our three representative theologians in their presentations of the eschatological future. They each interpret the parousia of Christ

¹ Schwartz, *Eschatology*, 289.

as essential to the eschatological future. Christ's return, and the events that accompany it, interrupts time in order to end it and to transform temporal creation into an eternal existence. We shall examine our three theologians' views on the eschatological future and how time is involved or eliminated in their presentations of these events. Again, we shall interpret the future christologically and therefore examine it through the event of Jesus' resurrection, which straddles the boundary between time and eternity.

The Problem of "The End" & The Parousia of Christ

The return of Christ is, for Mackintosh, central to the faith of the New Testament, and the message of the New Testament cannot be understood without this cardinal object to which its writers looked forward.² While acknowledging that the biblical descriptions of the parousia are symbolic, they nevertheless convey the truth that the transcendent Christ shall return to finish what was begun during his earthly ministry.³ What we see in Mackintosh's thought is the inkling of a futuristic eschatology in that what Christ began during his ministry, life, death, and resurrection remains incomplete without his coming in glory to establish God's eternal kingdom. This completion, however, will be marked by an abrupt disjunction between what was before and what comes at the end: "When He spoke about his triumph, as he did frequently, it was not as of something destined to occur within this present order...For

² "In the literature of primitive Christianity the Parousia holds a commanding place. The writers of the New Testament are men who look forward intensely to the great event; life for them is ruled by a transcendent hope. Redemption as an experience, so far as making the Return of Christ otiose, renders it the chief object of anticipation. Only the first chapter had been written." Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 132.

³ Dodd has a similar approach to the truth of the parousia contained in the symbolic language of the New Testament. See his *The Coming of Christ – Four Broadcast Addresses for the Season of Advent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 16-17.

Jesus, the new order comes from God, by interposition, when and as He may think best; the redemptive crisis is such as to wholly outstrip the powers of nature.” By powers of nature, Mackintosh implies the current structure of reality as we know it, including its temporality. The parousia is a crisis moment, then for all reality because evil and good exist together in the present order. There must be an abrupt ending to the progress of time because in time evil progresses along with good, as Mackintosh is well aware: “Tares grow beside the wheat.” So, the moment of Christ’s return will be one outside the structure of space and time.

Jesus himself was aware of his future transcendence over history, even if his statements about the timing of his parousia varied from time to time.⁴ There is a sense of immediacy to Jesus’ statement in Matthew 16:28 that “I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.” Mackintosh interprets this statement to mean that Jesus is expressing his transcendence in temporal terms to assure his followers of his nearness in power and love, which they may draw upon readily:

This, we may believe, was at least part of the truth underlying those elements in Jesus’ teaching which ostensibly mean an early Parousia. He employed a conceptual form native to the Jewish mind to express His own absolute control of the future. What filled his mind was the assurance that after His departure the powers of an endless life would still reach men through Him; and it is necessary to recollect that the nearness of the unseen and divine, which Greek thought expressed in spatial terms, was more naturally set forth by Jewish thought in terms of time.⁵

The resurrected Jesus is near, perpetually near in power, love, and wisdom to those who live as disciples. Christ’s union with his disciples transcends temporal boundaries, yet this nearness is expressed in temporal language in order to be

⁴ See Matthew 10:23; Matthew 23:-51; Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 12:35-48; Luke 18:8.

⁵ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 138.

conceptually understood.⁶ The effect of Mackintosh's perspective is a collapsing of spatial boundaries along temporal lines, which is problematic for a dynamic view of time. Time and space are separate entities that cannot be spoken of as synonymously as Mackintosh appears to be doing here.⁷

The return of Christ will be a final manifestation of his transcendence and the completion of the work begun in his ministry, and for Mackintosh this event will be the real "close" of history. It is not clear at this point if Mackintosh means that the parousia will be an event in history that finishes it, or if it will be beyond history. On the one hand he describes the end of history to be a "worthy *dénouement* of the story of a world in which God has redeemed His people."⁸ But the *dénouement* is still part of the story that has not yet reached its end. I assume that when Mackintosh speaks of the "abrogation of spatial relations" in the End, that he means something similar about time. He writes: "The good purpose of the Father cannot attain to the full reality in space and time. The Kingdom is transcendent, and only under transcendent conditions – such as are in our minds when we speak of heaven and immortality – does it come to final being."⁹ There is a sense of finality and closure to the development, change, and becoming of history, and the End will be the culmination of redemption worked through the passage of history.

This means that Mackintosh believes that God has a final, post-temporal goal toward which God is directing creation throughout the temporal process of its history.

⁶ Here Mackintosh seeks to solve the dilemma posed by Schweitzer regarding the failure of Jesus' expectation of his immanent return. Werner follows Schweitzer in declaring that the development of Christian doctrine emerged from the fact that the parousia did not occur. Martin Werner, *The Formation of Christian Dogma: An Historical Study of its Problem*, trans. S. G. F. Brandon (New York: Harper, 1957), 71-72; see also Fritz Buri, *Christian Faith in Our Time*, trans. E. A. Kent (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 124-126.

⁷ Even for an advocate of Relativity Theory, time and space are not synonymous. See Robinson, *Eternity and Freedom*, 65-76.

⁸ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 140.

⁹ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 141.

Although history is leading up to this goal, the goal is not attainable through the world's progress, and the end is not something that will grow out of the world. The goal, a "perfect conclusion" according to Mackintosh, is not reached through any evolutionary process in which creation merges with God's kingdom. Rather, the conclusion comes from beyond history and is imposed upon the process through the parousia: "Hence the attainment of the final goal must be mediated through the interruption and supersession of the present order; and while it may be a question whether its arrival is rightly to be termed 'abrupt' or 'catastrophic,' it is at all events something to which no sort of justice is done by the idea of homogeneous continuity. And to this truth Jesus' conception of a Parousia recalls us."¹⁰ In his view of history, Mackintosh asserts that God is leading history toward an end, yet when he describes the transition of the historical process into its conclusion, time cannot continue in its present progression. Time itself will be not only interrupted but superseded by the transcendence of God's perfect order: eternity.

Mackintosh describes the perfection and finality of creation's goal in God's eternity, and it begs the question of whether this perfect state is dynamic or static. Mackintosh seems to imply that the parousia stops the passage of time so that history ends in a "perfect conclusion." By this he means the removal of anything inconsistent with God's holy love, but perfection implies that nothing more may come of that which is now complete. God grants life to his followers in this state of perfection so that all hostilities, i.e. sin, are withdrawn. Mackintosh does not, however, mean to say that reality in the perfect kingdom of God is thereby static. The kingdom of God is not simply as a place of rest and changelessness. Just as life in this world has change

¹⁰ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 144. In regard to the questionable catastrophic end of history, Mackintosh appears to be alluding to the concept as found in Harnack, *What is Christianity*, 52.

and growth, so also it is true eternal life will not be a monotonous state of simple rest.

Life in God's kingdom will be a life of progress, change, and movement:

The continuity of this life with the next would be severed at a stroke if the fluid and dynamic conditions of earthly moral experience were on a sudden to be replaced by static and unchanging modes. So, if heaven be a moral life, the gifts of God will still be made ours by desire and appropriation....Life will move within the fact of perfect love answering to, and subsisting on, the blessed love of God; and in an experience so qualified, effort is one with eternal satisfaction.¹¹

In this way life in God's kingdom is portrayed by Mackintosh as a constant and unending movement toward God. The Christian's eschatological joy is found in attaining increasing communion with God and others, and this communion only increases in a cycle of divinely-inspired love. The desire for communion is satisfied by even a greater desire for communion, yet there is no dissatisfaction in living eternally in the kingdom of God's love. There is, no doubt, some contradiction in Mackintosh's view that human beings will reach perfection in God's kingdom, yet they will have perpetually increasing desire for God's love. He envisions a dynamic cycle of movement within God's love, but a cycle by definition can hardly be thought of as dynamic.

In contrast to those who follow him, Mackintosh does little to relate the parousia of Christ to the consummation of creation. In fact, it is a weakness of his eschatology that he hardly speaks anywhere of the consummation and the universal manifestation of God's glory. The closest he comes to speaking of the consummation in glory is found in his descriptions of eternal life in God's kingdom. In a way that foreshadows those who follow him, Mackintosh asserts that there is continuity between temporal life and eternal life in God's kingdom that comes from one's relationship with Christ. In faith every experience with Christ brings with it a closer

¹¹ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 244.

relationship, and no future life would be of any value if it did not offer a closer intimacy with Christ. The hope for God's kingdom is a hope that there awaits a more glorious revelation of Christ.

Christians would not hope for the kingdom of God if one's communion with Christ does not outgrow the limits of the present. Eternal life in God's kingdom is the ultimate object of hope because it promises a fulfillment to one's relationship with Christ: "To remove the hope of seeing Christ beyond the grave, in an unclouded fellowship, is to cut the root of Christian life and power. We cannot imagine a point at which our sense of indebtedness to him will terminate, or our desire to serve in payment of the obligation. Many things we shall outgrow and leave behind, but not the consciousness of owing everything to God's love in Jesus, the historic Mediator."¹² Christians live with a loving dependence upon Christ that will only increase in the God's kingdom, where one's vision of Christ is immediate in his presence.

Mackintosh affirms the conviction that in eternal life, Christians will maintain their relationships with others from earthly life, and this highlights the communal nature of the kingdom of God, which is full of loving relationships. Mackintosh decries the limited vision modern people have toward the kingdom that is attributable to the incurable individualism that afflicts modern Christianity. A modern Christian's concern with "my salvation" often neglects the fact that life is communal and framed by relationships, and so also will this be true of life in God's kingdom. Each person will be in closer communion with God, which will, in turn, allow persons to enter more deeply and truly into each other's life and love. Part of the promise of eternal life is the end to all obstacles that prevent human beings from loving one another

¹² Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 233-234.

fully. True human communion in eternal life will be enabled by the permeating power of God's love.

Mackintosh believes that New Testament portrays life in heaven as a divine society which, in contrast to the divisions and conflicts of history, is made perfect in the eternal love of God. No one experiences eternal life in isolation, and therefore "reunion with lost friends, accordingly, is not a sentimental detail in pictures traced by fancy; it is part of the hope guaranteed in Jesus....In the unseen world, as in this, each new gift unites us not only to the Father, but to all the brothers of His household."¹³ What is lacking in Mackintosh's writings is how God's love will reconcile historical enemies in his kingdom. Brunner and Moltmann base this reconciliation on the outpouring of God's love in the consummation and glorification of creation. The closest Mackintosh comes to this universal reconciliation is a brief allusion to the idea that all people in heaven will be subject to God's universal love.

In Brunner's theology, the coming of God in the parousia of Christ generates the completion of humanity in its divinely given purpose, and the consummation of creation is the all-embracing goal of human existence. Brunner seeks to connect the parousia to other events of the eschatological future, i.e. judgment, resurrection, and consummation, and in so doing it is often difficult to see how these terms differ from one another in Brunner's writing. In many places, Brunner uses the terms parousia, resurrection, and consummation in nearly synonymous ways. Therefore describing any one of these necessitates contemplation of all.

Brunner, when he speaks of the problem of the end of history, acknowledges that the event of the parousia of Christ as described in scripture cannot be categorized as an historical event within the modern world-view. The most significant disparity

¹³ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 238.

between the world-view of the biblical writers and that of the twentieth century is the composition of time. The scientific revolution has so altered our concepts of time as it relates to the universe and history that we cannot agree with any fundamentalist interpretation of scripture regarding a geo-centric universe or a “short” history of creation. We now know that the universe of the ancient world and that of the modern world are worlds apart. This is so much so the case that “the net result of this change in our conception of the time-span, effected by exact observation and experiment, is a millionfold widening of the horizons of cosmic time.”¹⁴ What this means in eschatology is that the parousia must be discussed in terms that are neither wildly out of sync with biblical metaphors of the end or the scientific outlook of the universe. This is the dilemma of Brunner as he seeks to describe the parousia as the event in which time ends in the presence of God’s eternity.¹⁵

Like Mackintosh, Brunner regards the parousia as an expectation that is central to Christian faith. It is *the* source of hope for humanity: the coming God who chooses to dwell with creation in a never-ending relationship. The advent of God to his people is the controlling theme of the Bible as God promises to come to his people to bring redemption through his reign. Interestingly, Brunner relies on the tenses of time to explain the controlling nature of this theme: “The coming of God to man which is the theme of the Old Testament is thus explicated in the New, in the three dimensions of time: He has come, He is present and He will come. In this unity of faith, hope, and love consists the existence of the church, of the Body of Christ.”¹⁶ The one who lives according to the theme of God’s coming thereby experiences each

¹⁴ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 121.

¹⁵ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 124-125.

¹⁶ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 137.

of these aspects of tense as part of a faith.¹⁷ In faith one looks back at the life and ministry of Christ, lives with Christ presently, and anticipates his future advent. Christ is the subject who makes one's faith, hope, and love real, and "therefore hope can have no other object than that He who has *come* – in the form of a servant – *will come* again in glory."¹⁸ The tenses of experience are aligned with experiences of faith, with preeminence given to hope for the future on account of the promise of Christ's anticipated return.

Taking this promise seriously requires us to define the parousia according to language that is symbolic, and it is in this interpretation of symbols where Brunner has trouble determining if the parousia is a temporal or atemporal event. It will be an event, and all events require temporality, yet it will be an event unlike any other space-time occurrence:

When we speak of the imminent end of history we obviously mean a happening which takes place in space and time, for it belongs to everything historical that it takes place in space and time, even though its full meaning cannot be grasped in space-time categories. It is precisely this confinement to the limits of space and time which constitutes the nature of events. But if we say end of history we imply something which bursts the framework of space and time and destroys the structure of the historical.¹⁹

The "bursting" of time's framework means that the parousia must be transcendent to temporality. To illumine what he means here, Brunner imagines the transcendent nature of the parousia through Jesus' own comparison of his return to a flash of lightning²⁰: "The lightning flash is probably of all the possibilities of expression open to us the one symbol which expresses most effectively this transcendence of space

¹⁷ Barth offers a contrasting thought to the tenses of one's life as they reflect our finitude and limitation – the fragmentation of time in human experience. See *Church Dogmatics*, III/2, 511; 553-564

¹⁸ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 138.

¹⁹ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 130-121.

²⁰ Luke 17:24: "For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other."

and time. Lightning is, so to speak, a happening without temporal extension, its flash nowhere and everywhere at the same time.”²¹ Christ will come again in glory in a way that is manifested everywhere, yet without temporal extension, and his coming in glory is paralleled by the consummation of creation.

The parousia of Christ and the resulting consummation of history are events of cosmological proportion and significance, and Brunner arrives at his conclusions on the consummation by employing what he terms a *theanthropocentric* solution. To arrive at the Christian doctrine of the consummation, one must understand the theanthropocentric nature of creation. Brunner’s defines the term theanthropocentric as “God-man centered,” and he employs it in reference to the purpose of all creation in relation to Jesus Christ.²² The eschatological and cosmological positions offered by the New Testament are theanthropocentric in essence, and they are based solely on the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. Christ is inseparably related to creation and consummation because the universe itself has its being in the God/human being of Christ.

He, the personal Logos of creation, has been incarnated and revealed in Jesus Christ the Redeemer, and He is also the personal Logos inhering in world-consummation. The world was created in Him, through Him and unto Him. The world must be envisaged neither from the standpoint of its ultimate objectivity—which would imply an idolization of the world—nor from that of its subjectivity—which would imply an idolization of the ego—but from the standpoint of the divine Logos, who became man in Jesus Christ. It is a *theanthropocentric* world.²³

The main implication of a theanthropocentric reading of the New Testament is that Jesus Christ is both the origin and the goal of human life, and therefore hope for the consummation contradicts both a materialistic nihilism and a subjective egocentrism.

²¹ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 140.

²² Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 3, 431.

²³ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 194.

Theanthropocentric cosmology means that humanity is not merely a tiny form of life on a speck of dust suspended in orbit around one of many millions of suns in a seemingly unlimited universe. Likewise, with a faithful, theanthropocentric outlook, humans are humble enough to know that the self is not the most important and only true entity that exists, as if human beings alone were immortal. In a theanthropocentric cosmology, the ostensible impersonality of a vast universe and the vanity of human intelligence are negated by the God who becomes human in order to illumine humanity's place within the whole. History is given its meaning by the once-and-for-all event of Jesus Christ, who shows that the cosmos exists for the purpose of salvation. Theanthropocentric theology is concerned with the consummation of all things just as it defines the creation of all things, and the consummation of the world should be apprehended in the same way as the world's creation: through the cosmic Christ. Creation and consummation are bound together by the strength of the theanthropocentric standard which engenders both.

Because creation is theanthropocentric, the relationship between humanity and God as mediated by Christ is the most important element of creation, and the importance of this relationship defines the meaning of consummation. God wills human fulfillment in the coming kingdom, and it is God's lordship over his kingdom that unites humanity in its shared consummation among all peoples. In contrast to the unity of humanity attempted within earthly, political states, human unity in God's kingdom will not be a unity imposed by compulsion. The unity of humanity in God's kingdom will be established and recognized by freedom: the true freedom of self-sacrificing service toward others. Brunner believes that the citizens of God's kingdom engage in acts of love and service toward one another. The kingdom's inhabitants will exist in a fellowship based on creative freedom and a unity of love that embraces

others. The unity of humanity in the kingdom of God will produce acts of self-sacrificial love which mirror the selfless actions of the Christ who brings in the kingdom in glory.

The unity of humanity in the kingdom of God will be based on all humanity's shared created identity in the image of God. This unity has its source only in God, and it is God's Spirit which will overcome the divisions and hostilities caused by human sin. In the present world, blood kinship and national identities bring both unity and cause divisions. In the kingdom of God, everyone shall be unified by the Spirit into a community where unity arises from the common identity of each person as a creature made in the image of God. The kingdom of God will overcome all national, cultural, racial, and family histories because the kingdom is such where the image of God in people has overriding significance. The history of the world is marked by the strength of nations and of individuals who powerfully enforce their will on others, but the kingdom of God is that of the vulnerable, and the child-like. It is the place where there is no privilege or rank, but there is common service of all. The kingdom of God is a dramatic reversal of the earthly structures and means of power, and whole cultures will be transformed in God's kingdom.

Brunner opens himself up to confusion, however, as he contradicts himself regarding the continuity and discontinuity between the created world and the consummated kingdom. As Shuurman notes, Brunner has not adequately worked out his relation between the creation and the redeemed creation.²⁴ Brunner affirms the goodness of the created order, including humans, while also insisting that the consummation will completely change the present fallen world, and especially human

²⁴ Douglas J. Schuurman, *Creation, Eschaton, and Ethics: The Ethical Significance of the Creation-Eschaton Relation in the Thought of E. Brunner and J. Moltmann* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 77.

beings. While the reality of sin and evil necessitates the eschatological redemption of the world, Brunner does not clearly articulate the relation between pre-redeemed and post-redeemed creation. On the one hand he maintains that there is continuity between present creation and the eschatological future, while on the other hand he claims that all will be radically changed in God's new creation when Christ returns in glory.

Like those before him, Moltmann asserts that Christ's mission, all his suffering, his dying, and his rising would be incomprehensible without the expectation of Christ's return in the glory of God. It is the parousia of Christ which binds all christology together, and the eschatological person of Christ is defined in terms of this anticipated event. Those who discount hope for parousia on account of its "delay", i.e. Schweitzer and others, do so because they wrongly temporalize expectations of the parousia, viewing it as another event within time rather than seeing it as the end of time and the abolition of history. The eschatological moment of parousia will be that event which both draws time to a close and signals the advent of the eternal kingdom of God.

Moltmann shares Brunner's emphasis on the coming of God as the controlling theme of eschatological hope. The parousia of Christ will signal the consummation of the world, including time, and the perfecting of our limiting forms of space and time.²⁵ It will provide the transformation of creation into the new creation where death and evil are removed so that God's creatures may live in perfect fellowship with each other and with God. With his preference for the future as the source of hope, Moltmann gives tremendous support to the idea that the parousia of Christ is the

²⁵ See also Walter Künneth, *The Theology of the Resurrection*, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM Press, 1965), 285-286.

moment of creation's completion and healing of the sin and abuse that has wreaked havoc in creation throughout its existence.²⁶

There is a trend in Jesus' life by which he promises the future coming of the kingdom, and all the events of Jesus' life point toward his future advent. The past events in the history of Christ thrust toward his future: "The community of the Christ's people expects that his parousia will bring the fulfillment of the history of salvation and the termination of the history of affliction and disaster, the fulfillment of liberation and the end of suffering. That is why the parousia of Christ and the end of this world-time belong together."²⁷ Everything in Christ's ministry, life, and death points toward the future, looking beyond themselves to an eschatological kingdom, and the parousia signals the transformation of this transitory world into the eternal kingdom of God.²⁸

Moltmann's main dilemma concerning the parousia, like those before him, is how to describe this eschatological moment which is both an event in time and an event which ends time and is therefore outside or beyond time. He struggles to explain how the parousia of Christ will be the "last day" while at the same time be the end of time and the enveloping of time by eternity. The confusion Moltmann tries to overcome, like those before him, is how to define the parousia in relation to the end of history. The parousia cannot be another moment within history because it would then be part of the historical process which awaits redemption. Yet the parousia must also

²⁶ Miroslav Volf does not believe that Moltmann adequately distinguishes between creation's *completion* and *redemption* in the consummation. Whereas Moltmann speaks often of creation's completion in a new creation, Volf wishes Moltmann would emphasize creation's healing and redemption from evil. For his part, Moltmann responds that transformation and redemption are similar terms for the healing of creation of its evil. See Volf, "After Moltmann," in *God Will Be All in All*, 245-252; and "Can Christian Eschatology Become Post-Modern?" in *God Will Be All in All*, 259-264.

²⁷ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 321.

²⁸ In this way, Moltmann's theology is highly millennial, and Moltmann picks up a theme of eschatology, millennialism, that had been neglected for many years. While disagreeing with some aspects in Moltmann, Bauckham helpfully traces Moltmann's millennialist thinking in "The Millennium," *God Will Be All in All*, 123-154.

be related to time if it is to be the moment of time's end and the transition into eternity.

To describe the parousia's transcendence over time, Moltmann returns to his doctrine of the creation of time in the "moments" of God's creative resolve: the primordial moment and the moment of inception for creation. To describe the eschatological moment of the parousia, Moltmann declares that how one understands the end of time relates directly to how one understands "the beginning." As we saw in the previous chapter, Moltmann believes that time is an element of creation itself, and just as time came into being with creation, so also will time end with the parousia and the ensuing new creation. The divine primordial moment is God's self-restriction of his eternity to allow for time. The eschatological moment is the reverse of the primordial moment, and the parousia God will signal God's de-restriction of his restricted omnipresence and eternity in order to manifest his glory in the transfigured creation. The temporality of creation will be ended in the unrestricted eternity of God. The original divine self-limitation which made the time possible will work in the opposite direction as time gives way to God's ubiquitous, eternal self.

The eschatological moment has the dual result of God's de-restriction of his glory and the accompanying entering of creation into the kingdom of glory. The eschatological moment is more than the consummation of individuals and human history: it will be the consummation of all creation since its inception and beginning. The end of time is the symmetrical converse of the beginning of time, and God's de-restriction will occur so that God may be all in all: "The temporal creation will then become an eternal creation, because all created beings will participate in God's eternity. The spatial creation will then become an omnipresent creation, because all

created beings will participate in God's omnipresence."²⁹ The eschatological moment has the double outcome of God's willful de-restriction of his restricted self as well as the appearance of God's splendor to all creation. At this eschatological moment, the temporal creation experiences its transformation into the eternal creation, and as a result, time is transformed into eternity.

To discuss the nature of this transformation of time, Moltmann draws on a careful distinction between the concepts of *advent* and *future*. The future is descriptive of anticipated events within history. Things which are future are not yet, but are coming to be and moving towards the present. These events, however, like all others, shall also pass away into the category of past time, and all future events are bound to the passage of historical time. In contrast to the category of expected future is the concept of expected advent, which applies to the return of Christ. Christians anticipate that the advent of Christ will be the end of time and the beginning of God's eternal creation. The parousia must be seen as an event in God's eternity, and as such, the parousia is related, not merely to the future of creation, but equally to the present and the past of all things as well. "As the culminating and fulfilling end of history, the parousia of Christ will appear to all times simultaneously in a single instant. For the future of Christ also brings the end of becoming and the end of passing away."³⁰ Moltmann's understanding of the nature of parousia is therefore *diachronic*, meaning the simultaneous appearing of Christ to all times, places, and peoples -- in order to finally redeem them.

In this way, the parousia is an event that may be described as both tensed and tenseless. It exists as an event that stands not just at the end of history but over all history at the same time. Christ will be revealed at the same diachronic moment to all

²⁹ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 294.

³⁰ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 317.

peoples of history, and final redemption will occur simultaneously in his presence. This implies that the parousia should be seen as a tenseless event, in that it will occur in a rather static fashion to all times in one moment. The dynamic eschatological process in history that began with Christ's dying and rising continues to follow its course as time passes. But time does not move forward toward the parousia. The parousia comes to time and history and will confront all peoples of all times. Should we not conclude, then, that all times are statically "fixed" in relation to the parousia?

Again we see how Moltmann distinguishes between the "absolute eternity" of God and the "relative eternity" of the new creation in order to examine how humanity and creation could share in, but not be overwhelmed by, God's eternity. The unrestricted presence of God's eternity will be relatively experienced by creation through its participation in God's de-limited self. Moltmann again employs the patristic concept of *aeonic* time to convey the meaning of eternity enjoyed by created beings who partake in God's absolute eternity. The time of the world will not end but will be changed from linear time to aeonic time, which is experienced cyclically.

The passage of time will arrive at its destination in the eschaton, and rather than standing still, aeonic time reflects the Sabbath rest of God's creation in God's presence. Created time, which is aligned toward the future, will be transformed into the circular movements of the aeonic time of the new creation. The aeonic time of eternity is defined not according to length or passage of time but according to the experience of the presence of eternity. The new creation will exist in an unmediated relation to God, and eternity is a dimension of the quality of this new creation in relation to God. As we have seen, God's eternity is something far beyond the simple negation or superabundance of time. God's eternity is the fullness of creative life, and

eternity is to be understood as a descriptive term regarding the quality of life, as well as its never-ending duration.

As with Brunner before him, Moltmann cannot describe the parousia without also discussing in close relation the consummation of creation in the glory of God: they are differing aspects of the same eschatological event of God's final revelation of his glory. The glorification of God is the purpose and goal of creation, and Moltmann expounds upon the notion that the hiddenness of God's glory on earth will be met by the full revelation of God's glory upon consummation. Moltmann draws upon the Jewish Shekinah theology of God's historical indwelling within limited spaces on earth, as well as upon Christian incarnational theology, to examine both the hiddenness and revelation of God's glory.

Moltmann has built the case for God's self-restriction and allowance for the space of creation, yet Jewish and Christian theology also proclaims the indwelling of God within creation and history. How can the eternal and infinite God dwell within creation without destroying its time and space? Shekinah theology of Jewish doctrine links the infinite God with a finite, earthly space in which God dwells within the time and space of history.³¹ God desires to reveal himself in a particular place, and this special presence of God is based on the kenotic concept of descent and God's self-limitation within history. Shekinah theology describes the God who desires to be present in a specific place, such as the Temple, to reveal his will and glory. The Shekinah of God's glory is present in history at different times and places and before different people. God's Shekinah is sometimes present and sometimes absent, and it comes at the discretion of God and not human beings. The Shekinah of God goes into

³¹ See G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1965), 234ff.

exile with the Israelites, reminding them of God's presence with them despite the anxiety of exile and abandonment of the Temple.

Moltmann relies on the concepts of Shekinah theology -- God's glorious presence with his people -- in order to state how hope for the consummation is a hope for the eschatological Shekinah of God. Hope in the Shekinah of God is hope for the final and never-ending presence of God, and it is thus an eschatological hope. The eschatological revelation of God's glory is coupled with the return of the Shekinah, which will no longer be hidden. The glory which will completely fill heaven and earth is identical with the Shekinah that dwelt in the sanctuary of the temple.³² With this understanding, the time and space of history is understood as the time of exile, as a remoteness from the immediate presence of the glory of God. God is historically available only through the presence of the Shekinah.

God has veiled his glory to make room for creation, and by employing concepts of Shekinah theology, Moltmann describes how creation is destined to be the dwelling place of God. When God comes to dwell completely within creation, the space of creation itself will give way to God's glory. The limited indwelling of God through the Shekinah and the indwelling of God in Christ serve as precursors and pointers to God's final and full indwelling in creation -- when God shall be all in all.

Moltmann describes this all-in-all presence this way:

Through the historical process of indwelling and its eschatological completion, the distanced contraposition of the Creator *towards* his creation becomes the inner presence of God in his creation. To the external presence of God *above it* is added the inner presence of God *within it*. To the transcendence of the Creator towards his creation is added the immanence of his indwelling in his creation. With this the whole creation becomes the *house of God*, the temple in which God can dwell, the home country in which God can rest. All created beings participate directly and without mediation in his indwelling glory, and in it are themselves glorified. They participate in his divine life, and

³² Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 304.

live eternally. Once God finds his dwelling place in creation, creation loses its space outside God and attains to its place in God. Just as at the beginning the Creator made himself the living space for his creation, so at the end his new creation will be his living space.³³

This is not equivalent to an eschatological pantheism because God will remain distinct while the world retains definite creaturely life, yet they will dwell in one another without either losing their respective identities. These mutual indwellings mean that there will be a mutual participation in the attributes of the other. Just as God has taken temporality and restriction into himself, so also will human beings share in God's eternity and omnipresence.

This indwelling presence of God makes heaven and earth completely new, and the cosmic Shekinah is God's dwelling amongst his people. God's immediate presence interpenetrates everything, and the eschatological indwelling of God has the two characteristics of holiness and glory. Because God is holy, everything that belongs to God will be holy because it is the redeemed vessel of his indwelling. Everything unholy must be excluded from God's kingdom.³⁴ The antithesis between holy and unholy is a comprehensive one, and must be understood politically, economically, and morally. The glory lies in the shared divine splendor and the beauty of God's appearance everywhere. The beautiful radiance that shines through everything will be a visible sign of the all-inclusive presence of God and of the divine presence which fulfills everything. "The holiness and the glory of the eternal

³³ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 307.

³⁴ Karl Peters has recently written that modern science invalidates the possibility of universal Christian eschatological future by saying that "a universe in which the overcoming of evil by good, in which justice is finally served, is vastly different from the current scientific picture of an expanding universe with billions of galaxies each with billions of stars. It is so different that it is difficult to see how the details of biblical eschatology can be translated into the current scientific view of a future, universal eschatology.... If the expanding universe is indeed open, expanding forever, then how can one speak of God recreating the universe? If the universe is closed, then it is likely to end in a 'big crunch' of mammoth black-hole proportions. Again, it is difficult to see how a new creation can take place." Karl Peters, "Eschatology in Light of Contemporary Science (paper presented to the Theology and Science Group of the American Academy of Religion, November 1988), 9-10.

indwelling of God is the eschatological goal of creation as a whole and of all the individual created beings."³⁵ Moltmann concentrates on the "fullness of God", a phrase found in Ephesians 3:19, to elaborate on the concept of the pervasive glory of God. The fullness of God is the joyful nature of divine life, and God's overflowing fullness is the source of joy and exaltation for everything that lives. Life in the fullness of God is like a feast of eternal joy, and from the fullness of God people receive limitless grace and love for life. This full life enjoyed by humanity, and by all creation, becomes a song of eternal praise to God.

Eschatological Judgment

The parousia of Christ brings with it the event of eschatological judgment that also involves certain views of time in the description of it and its outcome. Any description of the kingdom of God necessarily entails action on God's part to eliminate finally everything evil that is hostile to God's love and reign. Assessing the scriptural accounts of judgment and the writings of our three theologians reveals that judgment is a crucial component to the overall purposes of God regarding human beings and the final consummation of creation in the glory of God.³⁶ Each of our three theologians dedicates considerable thought to the doctrine of final judgment, yet they arrive at differing viewpoints about the outcome of judgment for human beings.

³⁵ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 318.

³⁶ New Testament passages indicating a final judgment include, among others, Matthew 16:27: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."; 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil."; and Revelation 20:12: "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books."

As we shall see, the topic of universal salvation occupies much of their attention, and it is primarily here that we see the concept of time entering into their thought regarding either the eternal union or eternal separation from God. If one is forever separated from God as a result of judgment, then must this not include some form of temporality? There is a shift in thinking about the outcome of judgment from Mackintosh to Moltmann, with Brunner taking a middle position between two.³⁷ Even with their varying opinions regarding the outcome of judgment, each one holds firm to the understanding that judgment is fundamental to God's redemptive purposes for human beings.

Judgment implies moral accountability, condemnation, punishment for sin, and rewards for righteousness, and Scripture consistently refers to God as the divine Judge whose will defines righteousness. Traditionally, theology has held that the outcome of judgment is the separation of the righteous from the condemned and that each person is designated as one or the other according to his actions in this life.³⁸ Yet Scripture, not to mention several hundred years of Protestantism, also describes humanity's complete reliance upon God's merciful grace for salvation because no one can live up to the righteousness of God. If God's love is sovereign, how can God's loving purposes for all humanity's salvation be thwarted?

The main issue at stake surrounding the debate about judgment is the relationship between God's love and God's holiness. Does God's love for humanity allow any room for God's righteous wrath to punish sinners according to their deeds,

³⁷ Regarding the doctrine of universal salvation in modern theology, Bauckham has observed: "Eternal punishment was firmly asserted in official creeds and confessions of churches. It must have seemed as indispensable a part of universal Christian belief as the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. Since 1800 this situation has entirely changed, and no traditional doctrine has been so widely abandoned as that of eternal punishment." Bauckham, "Universalism: A Historical Survey," in *Theopolios* 4, no. 2 (1979): 48-54.

³⁸ See James P. Martin, *The Last Judgment in Protestant Theology from Orthodoxy to Ritschl* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1963).

and if so, does that punishment also entail an eternal separation from God in hell? The traditional Reformed approach has been to allow for eternal separation in hell by limiting the scope of God's love to the redeemed, while the unredeemed receive the due punishment for their sins.³⁹ The character of God as supremely loving is called into question also by the classical Reformed assertion that God has created some people for salvation and others for punishment.⁴⁰ The idea that God has determined the eschatological fate of the individual appears to be a harsh caricature of the God who creates human beings with the freedom to decide for or against God.

The ideas of hell and the related category of God's wrathful punishment have come under intense criticism from both theological and philosophical angles as being ultimately incompatible with the love of God.⁴¹ The underlying assumption is that if God is love, then God cannot condemn some of his beloved creatures to eternal punishment in separation from that love. The doctrine of universal salvation provides a way for theologians to address the reality of evil without having to surrender completely the essential nature of God as loving. The loving God promises that all will one day be restored, even if that restoration must occur through the harshness and pain of judgment. There are real victims and there is real injustice, but the doctrine of universal salvation promises that injustice will not last forever.

It must be noted from the outset that final judgment is a concept fraught with difficulties because the Bible contains mixed messages about punishment and grace for human beings.⁴² For this reason both separationists and universalists appeal

³⁹ David Fergusson, "Will the Love of God Finally Triumph?", in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 189.

⁴⁰ See *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*, ed. J. K. S. Reid (Cambridge: Clark & Co., 1961); John Calvin, *Institutes* 3.23.6.

⁴¹ See Jonathan L. Kvanvig, *The Problem of Hell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 39ff.

⁴² I. H. Marshall, "Does the New Testament Teach Universal Salvation?" in *Christ in Our Place*, ed. T. Hart (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1989), 313-328.

passionately to scripture for justification of their positions. Separationists interpret passages about judgment, separation, and hell to mean that those who live their lives in willing opposition to God will be forever separated from the love and goodness of God after this life. Universalists interpret passages about the sovereign love of God to mean that all human beings will, eventually, live with God, even if it means being painfully judged in order to be purged of their sins.⁴³

Universal salvation has a long history within Christian doctrine, going back to its first main proponent in Origen of Alexandria.⁴⁴ Origen held that the development of a soul does not end with this life, and that after death there remains a purification of fallen souls before all are led back to God. The consummation of all things, for Origen, includes the destruction of all evil in every person before everyone returns to their source in God.⁴⁵ Even though Origen's system of universal salvation was condemned by the Synod of Constantinople in 543 A. D., traces of Origen's thought filter down through the centuries, and the basic argument remains the same.⁴⁶

In the modern era, Schleiermacher emerges as one of the most prominent advocates of universal salvation.⁴⁷ He believes that if there is but one supreme will in the universe, and if that will is almighty grace, then at long last the love of God will triumph over the dying struggles of human rebellion.⁴⁸ All people are predestined by God's will to salvation in Christ, contends Schleiermacher, and the sovereign divine

⁴³ Stephen Davis offers a survey of relevant passages in, "Universalism, Hell, and the Fate of the Ignorant," *Modern Theology* 6:2, January 1990, 173-174.

⁴⁴ Origen, *On First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1973); *Contra Celsum*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), VI, 26 & VIII, 72.

⁴⁵ Origen writes from his Neoplatonist view: "Such is the end when 'all enemies shall have been subjected to Christ.'...For the end is always like the beginning; as therefore there is one end of all things, and as there is one end of many things, so from one beginning arise many differences and varieties, which in their turn are restored, through God's goodness, through their subjection to Christ and their unity with the Holy Spirit, to one end, which is like the beginning." Origen, *On First Principles*, 53.

⁴⁶ Frederick Norris, *Universal Salvation in Origen and Maximus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992).

⁴⁷ Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 117-120.

⁴⁸ Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 713-717.

purpose cannot fail in the end. The process by which the unbeliever shall turn toward God is a psychological one, and Schleiermacher states that if future punishment is spiritual by nature, then it pertains to the mind, specifically the conscience. While on earth the lost have no pain of conscience in relation to God, but in death, their pain of conscience is such that it will awaken their awareness of God. With a grieved conscious now aware of God, the lost are thus elevated above their rebellious attitudes and into a proper understanding of God.⁴⁹ Since they are thus awakened to God and therefore properly relate to God, it is unjust that they should suffer any longer. The movement of remorse, which will be theirs after death, is a movement of repentance toward the good that God will acknowledge and reward.⁵⁰

We now turn to our three representative theologians and their views of eschatological judgment and its outcome. Mackintosh asserts that eschatological judgment forms a vital element in the outworking of God's history of salvation, and logically this implies that judgment is part of a continuation of the time-series. Since history is a moral operation for Mackintosh, God judges people throughout the continuation of history. Drawing on a lengthy list of both Old and New Testament citations, Mackintosh points out how central the concept of judgment is to a biblical doctrine of God. Inherent to the biblical understanding of judgment is the consistent presentation of the unified understanding of both mercy and severity in God's in dealing with human beings. With increasing anticipation, however, from the prophets through Daniel, there is a growing sense of future judgment, and this judgment assumes significance not only for Israel, but also the entire world.

⁴⁹ Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 719.

⁵⁰ Schleiermacher is thus able to conclude that the divine decree of election which marks the inclusion of some into the Church in this life will be applied to all eventually so that the church will be complete in God's Kingdom: All "are objects of the same divine activity that gathered the Church together, and are embraced along with us all under the same divine fore-ordination." Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 548.

Whether it is Amos' threatening predictions of the dreadful "Day of the Lord" or Isaiah's more positive visions of God's plan of redemption for the whole world, there is a movement of eschatological expectation that grows toward the end of the Old Testament period. In particular, Messianic hope expands in the later years of Jewish writing to focus on a kingly figure who comes from God to forgive sin, execute judgment, conquer death, and establish God's reign. In addition to hope for the nation or community of the faithful, later developments in Old Testament eschatology begin to project hope for the individual in a life after death, and it is this development that feeds into the New Testament conviction of the resurrection from the dead.⁵¹ What emerges in Mackintosh's view is that judgment is another event in the continuation of salvation history. The dynamic movement of history continues with history, so that judgment is part of that history. It appears that judgment is not an event "after" time in eternity, but part of the temporal process itself.

Judgment is a temporal process, and as such, Mackintosh places judgment within history because Christ executes both redemption and judgment on humanity's behalf. The redemption from sin that was begun by Christ during his ministry will not be complete until Christ's universal judgment over all sin. The issue at stake for Mackintosh is the fact that Christ functions as Mediator in his dual roles and Redeemer and Judge of humanity within time:

Christ is central as Redeemer; if in history as proceeding now He has certified Himself to faith as One on whose person everything turns in the relation of God to man -- and the Church has no other message -- He will be central also at the end, and no human life can be conceived as finally placed out of relation to Him as the all-determining reality... If *any* decisive close be in store for human life, then, unless it were indissolubly bound up with the personality of Christ, we should have to

⁵¹ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 33.

regard the climax of God's dealings with men as strangely out of line and out of keeping with all the rest.⁵²

Jesus is God's Mediator who brings redemption from sin, and the redemption which Christ began in the past will not be complete until the final and decisive judgment within history.⁵³

Another factor which leads us to believe that judgment is a temporal event is the positive aspect of Judgment as an instrument of God's grace. Judgment is consistent with all of the other ways in which God deals graciously with humankind within temporality. Each person's history, existence in time, is a sinful one, and this history must be redeemed from within:

There is no reason why we should suppose this condemnation of sin to be excluded from His attitude to believers at the last. No more than now can He speak to us of what we are, and have done, except as good and evil in our life stand out for His reprobation or approval, in perfect openness. But the point is that judgment in this sense, real and searching as it is, is love's instrument, and serves love's purpose. It is by passing through it that believing men are finally delivered from the effects of their sinful history.⁵⁴

Mackintosh implies here that this "passing through" judgment is another event within the temporal life of human beings so that their "histories" may be once and for all purged of resistance to God. For Mackintosh, therefore, judgment is a temporal event of grace that serves as a precondition to eternal life with God: "To be tried at last, in Christ's presence, may be truly designated as the last means of grace for the redeemed. There will be pain in it, doubtless, beyond our imaging -- the purifying and emancipating shame of those who bend under the condemnation of perfect love, in

⁵² Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 184.

⁵³ Mackintosh echoes Luther's analysis of judgment as an historical event, summed up in his hopeful anticipation: "Come, dear, last day." As quoted in the discussion in Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 420-421.

⁵⁴ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 193.

full assurance that for all their guilt they will not be cast out."⁵⁵ To be reminded of one's sin is, in a way, to relive it and to experience it anew, and this cannot happen if eternity is the domain of the redeemed. Each person will be shown all the awful reality his in order that the one judged and pardoned may understand the greatness of God's love toward human beings.

Questions about universal salvation arise when one considers the final fate of those who do not or cannot, for whatever reasons, confess faith in Christ and live in a relationship with God. Mackintosh is acutely aware of the massive number of people around the globe who either adamantly refuse to believe the Christian message or who never hear the message and never have an opportunity for faith. What is the ultimate fate of those who persist in their hostility to God and those who remain in ignorance of Christ? Is their continuation in alienation from God to be viewed along temporal lines so that one's opposition to God continues forever? If so, is not the very concept of "forever" a temporal one?

Mackintosh denies the prospect of universal salvation by saying that the New Testament only alludes to universalistic views in occasional verses, and he believes that the case for universalism can be made only after removing such verses from their context and standing them in isolation.⁵⁶ In the overall portrayal of God, Scripture does not subordinate God's holiness to God's love, which is the case in universalism. Mackintosh believes that the scriptural allusions to God's love for all and God's desire for all to be saved do not displace the reality of free human decisions to reject

⁵⁵ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 194.

⁵⁶ Mackintosh cites several verses that are often referred to in the argument for universal salvation, verses such as: 1 Corinthians 15:22 ("that God may be all in all"); Romans 5:18 ("As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive"); Romans 6:32 ("Through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life"); and Philippians 2:10 ("That in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow").

God. Universal salvation not only denies separation after judgment, it also denies human beings the freedom given to them at creation.⁵⁷

The freedom given to human beings is the freedom to choose in favor of God or to reject God, and Mackintosh views universal salvation, not as an act of love on God's part, but an act of force which denies freedom. Jesus revealed the love of a God who does not enter people's lives by brute force, compelling them through the gates of the kingdom.⁵⁸ Advocates for universalism appeal to God's magnanimous love for all people and the divine, sovereign will to carry out God's loving purposes. Taking this logic to its end, this means that God will force God's opponents to love him over and against their own sinful choices. Mackintosh's rejection of universal salvation is based partly on the idea that love which forces its way is not the divine love revealed in Jesus. His assessment of universalism is that human freedom is lost in the overpowering activity of God, and in this way universalism sacrifices freedom in order to magnify God's grace. What we will see with Moltmann is that God's freedom to choose in favor of humanity through Christ is a gracious act which is stronger than people's ability to refuse. What remains paramount for Mackintosh is the moral freedom that humans have to choose whether or not to love God, and this freedom is not restricted to temporal history.

The ethical significance of the present life is, for Mackintosh, continued in life after death, and this life may be eternally lived in opposition to God. Mackintosh states plainly: "If God be the God we meet in Jesus Christ, fixed opposition to God's

⁵⁷ Stephen T. Davis, "Universalism, Hell, and Ignorance," in *Modern Theology* 6:2 (1990): 179.

⁵⁸ "When schemes are drawn up whereby all men eventually *must* be swept into the divine Kingdom, they appear to have lost touch with the moral realities of New Testament religion. It is in this sense that to proclaim Universalism as a certainty is rightly repelled as disloyal to the Gospel, for nothing will permanently commend itself to the believing mind which tends, as such dogma must, to lower the ethical significance of present life." Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 206-207.

will must entail suffering, and this is true if the next life has a moral framework."⁵⁹ Mackintosh holds out little hope for those who have conclusively rejected Christ after contemplating his relevance for their life. Those who reject Christ in hostility or apathy have had their say regarding his will for their lives. For those who reject God and Christ, the outcome of judgment is certain: eternal separation from God.

The sorest punishment of sin lies in the sinner's isolation alike from God and man. To sin and break up fellowship are one thing. Whether it be pride or lust, sin essentially involves the shutting up of our own life within the limits of our own ego. We banish ourselves from the presence of the Father and others. The loss of a living connection with God is *par excellence* the punishment of sin... Christian faith recognizes eternal life in God and His kingdom as the highest good and ultimately the only true good. Conversely, the greatest evil, ultimately the only real evil, is eternal death, i.e. definitive separation from the living God.⁶⁰

Eternal separation cannot be divorced from some sort of continued temporal existence in eternity, as described by Mackintosh.

Despite his antagonism toward universal salvation, Mackintosh does dedicate a portion of his thought to the prospect of a person's having saving, post-temporal contact with Christ after death, and Mackintosh contends that Christian theology does offer hope for certain people who have not had faith in this life. He believes that it is too rigid an interpretation of New Testament thought to fix the fate of the stranger to God strictly according to his relationship with God at the point of death. He therefore holds out the possibility of some kind of post-death reconciliation for those who have never been exposed to the Gospel message.⁶¹ While acknowledging that he can only speculate on such a matter, he proposes that a future reconciliation may happen at the time of God's judgment of humankind. Mackintosh relies on the notion that God's

⁵⁹ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 195.

⁶⁰ Mackintosh, *Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, 168.

⁶¹ For another, more recent presentation of this belief, see George Lindbeck, "Fides ex auditu and the Salvation of Non-Christians," in *The Gospel and the Ambiguity of the Church*, ed. Vilmos Vajta (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 92-123.

love is truly infinite and beyond human understanding and control. Human beings cannot direct the will or the love of God when it comes to those who have not heard of saving grace through Christ:

We are interested in [the] argument that men who have not utterly rejected the divine love, and cannot be truthfully described as obstinately wicked, will after death hear the words of life and peace...Heathen who have not heard Jesus' name, children who die young, imbecile minds, all those whom the beauty of holiness has never been presented – these, and others in like case, may look for something better than to be dismissed into the rayless night of perdition.⁶²

Mackintosh believes that if a person of no faith were simply to come face to face with the holy love of Christ, as Christians have in this life, then these former unbelievers would also then trust in and have fellowship with Christ.⁶³ Mackintosh is rightly concerned to address the eschatological destiny of those who may never have heard the Christian message, and indeed even those who may not have had faith in their life. In some ways, this approach by Mackintosh is a prelude to the thought of Moltmann, who speaks of those lives that are cut short before faith or who do not have the capacity to know God.

Brunner describes eschatological judgment as a prelude to the kingdom of God, and for each person there is no entrance into eternal life except through “the narrow pass” of judgment. Prior to the consummation of creation is the purification of human beings through judgment, and all humans shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ.⁶⁴ All must be judged according to their works, and God’s judgment of

⁶² Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 158.

⁶³ “Let them meet Jesus, somehow and somewhere, let them feel the unique and amazing power to evoke faith which, as all believers know, resides in Him, and who shall say they too may not answer Him with trust and love?” Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 159.

⁶⁴ Cullmann also points out the significance of the imagery of the Son of Man's judgment over the nations in *The Christology of the New Testament*, trans. S. C. Guthrie and A. M. Hall (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 157-159.

a person's actions necessarily flows from the holiness of God.⁶⁵ God is not indifferent toward evil, and God's holiness has a distinct aim which excludes opposition to God. God carries through his will "against all resistance by means of the process of discrimination and crisis—the process of judgment."⁶⁶ Brunner's doctrine of judgment emerges from a synthesis God's holiness and sovereignty, and he concludes that the culmination of God's will shall be the unambiguous victory of God over evil.

Within time, there is a confused state of affairs in which obedience to God and opposition to God commingle and struggle against one another. There is not within history a clear, visible victor between God's goodness and the evil that opposes it. Human life now is a complex admixture of the good and evil that exist in the world, and something must happen to reveal and relieve this unbearable contradiction within humanity. More than human deeds will be judged, however, because sin, as a power, is larger than any one person. Because sin is the negation of God's creation, the power of evil must be destroyed by an act of divine judgment and annihilation. Judgment for Brunner is a post-historical event because a final discrimination between good and evil is not possible within the framework of history. Opposition to God within history will be ended by the full manifestation of God's righteousness beyond temporality. Judgment will end the confusion and anguish brought about by the co-mingling of good and evil. Through eschatological judgment it will be clear that resistance to God means ruin, while obedience to God gives life and peace. The process of judgment is the complete disclosure of that within human beings which resists God's grace, for this must be revealed before it can be eliminated.

⁶⁵ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 3, 418.

⁶⁶ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 173.

Following Mackintosh, Brunner emphasizes that judgment is not designed only to satisfy a sense of divine wrath but to be the instrument of redeeming love. The parallel concept of justice is grace, and judgment benefits the one being judged because it results in the separation of evil from the one who is an object of God's love. Judgment is not only the exposure of hidden sin because it is also the method of separation by which humans are healed of their sinfulness. Judgment is the outcome of God's wrath against sin, yet even wrath serves the purpose of redemption.⁶⁷

Despite his occasional objections to universalism, it seems clear that Brunner advocates for the final inclusion of all within the mercy of God. He tries to sidestep the debate about universalism by stating that scripture teaches both separation and universalism and that a faithful adherence to the biblical witness will affirm both. In this way Brunner hopes to occupy the middle ground between Mackintosh and Moltmann because he claims that biblical eschatology portrays the necessity of both mercy and wrath in God's future dealing with humanity.⁶⁸ Throughout his work on judgment, Brunner believes that God's abundant love for all people is as universally inclusive as God's universal condemnation of humanity's sin, which is shared by all. God's response to human sin in Jesus Christ applies to the sin of all human beings, and the sinful person cannot be ultimately defiant and stronger in his "no" to God than God's "yes" to humanity in Jesus Christ.

When it comes to interpreting passages regarding judgment versus universal salvation, Brunner states that the intent of Scripture is not to reveal a certain doctrine which must be heeded or debated, but rather, that through Scripture's words God is speaking the Word of challenge to human beings. Scripture's intent is to reveal a

⁶⁷ In a similar way Barth wishes not to dissect God's love and holiness into categories apart from each other. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II/2.

⁶⁸ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 3, 424.

living God, one who loves and who judges those whom he loves. The Word of God regarding salvation, whether it emerges from judgment or universal love, is not a doctrine to be believed -- it is always a personal Word to be trusted by each person who hears it. God's promise of both loving acceptance and holy justice confronts humanity by placing it in the middle of a struggle, and the God who speaks refuses any neutral observers. The Word of God pleads with human beings to recognize that divine decision which has already made in their favor.

Scriptural depictions of separation and universal salvation reflect God's twin attributes of holiness and love, and therefore both are accurate expressions of God's will concerning humanity's future. Brunner explains: "We must listen to the voice of world judgment as to the voice of God Himself, in order that we may fear Him; we must listen to the voice which speaks of universal redemption as to the voice of God Himself, in order that we may love Him. Only through this indissoluble duality do we grasp the duality of God's being which yet is one: His holiness and His love."⁶⁹ To proclaim God's universal love at the expense of judgment would be to deny that God holds people accountable for their actions, and universalism often contravenes the moral responsibilities which frame human living and actions. Conversely, favoring separation at the expense universal atonement implies that salvation follows necessarily from one's actions alone and not from the mercy of the God who saves humans despite their actions and hostile wills.⁷⁰

What is vital is the view that God is sovereign over the eschatological future and that its outworking emerges according to the initiative and action of God's doing.

⁶⁹ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 184.

⁷⁰ Moltmann does not see this dual emphasis on both universalism and separation in Brunner's thought. Moltmann believes that Brunner advocates too strongly for the position of eschatological separation as Brunner argues against the universalistic tones in Barth's theology. Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 239.

Here Brunner's argument is similar to one proposed by Barth, who insists on the freedom of God's grace as the starting point in any discussion about salvation. God offers universal grace to humanity in Jesus Christ, who is both God's elected and rejected Mediator.⁷¹ As such, Christ is the only rejected person, and all other persons are elected by grace through Christ. The question for Barth is how long a person will resist God's gracious election of him that has occurred in Christ: "The Church will then not preach an *apokatastasis*, nor will it preach a powerless grace of Jesus Christ or a wickedness of men which is too powerful for it. But without any weakening of the contrast, and also without any arbitrary dualism, it will preach the overwhelming power of grace and the weakness of human wickedness in the face of it."⁷² With this view, Barth proclaims that evil cannot stand against the gracious love of God, and there all will be received into the salvation offered by God through Christ. Brunner likewise emphasizes the sovereign freedom of God in bestowing grace to sinful humanity through Christ. It is God who directs humanity toward its teleological end through the means of both love and divine judgment. Despite his denials that he is a universalist, Brunner does prefer to leave the possibility of universal salvation as an "open question."⁷³

Final judgment does occupy an important place within Moltmann's larger eschatological project, and his descriptions of judgment he brings in discussions of time and eternity that are lacking in Brunner. For Moltmann, eschatological judgment is a description of the process by which God restores the whole of creation and reconciles all things to himself. Judgment is a necessary stage in the process of the purging of creation from evil, and judgment is a precondition for the establishing of

⁷¹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II/2, 340-354.

⁷² Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II/2, 477.

⁷³ Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 33; Bauckham, "Universalism," 53.

God's eternal kingdom of glory. God's justice and righteousness leads to the transformation of creation, and particularly for human beings, judgment is a stage along the way to the universal redemption.

The key for Moltmann is his desire to begin with the consummated, future kingdom of God and work "back" from the eschatological future. If God is to be "all in all," as Moltmann is fond of saying, then this has important consequences for the concepts of judgment. If God's all-pervasive kingdom will be the fullest manifestation of God's holiness, righteousness, and love, then what does this mean for evil and its future? Moltmann comes to no other conclusion than the universalistic one, meaning that all evil (but not persons who are evil) will be expunged from creation in the new creation. Working with the assumption that the kingdom of God is coming to all creation allows Moltmann to hold onto the Christian confession of God as both all-loving and all-powerful because the kingdom will be the realization of both these confessions. God's love will be stronger than any evil resistance, and God's loving omnipotence will be exercised in favor of all creatures and all creation in order to bring everything to full redemption.

Moltmann's main objective is to reinstate judgment as a positive, hopeful element of eschatological thought, rather than the horrible, terrifying aspect which is portrayed in medieval art and much of the history of eschatological writing. A final judgment which causes fear and terror is untrue to genuine hope in God "because psychologically it has done so much to poison the idea of God, [and] it is high time to discover the gospel of God's judgment and to awaken joy in God's coming righteousness and justice."⁷⁴ Since the cross was the revelation of God's love for the world and God's desire and means for reconciliation, the last judgment is the

⁷⁴ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 235.

conclusion of that process which was begun at the cross. Christ's death on the cross is the basis for universal forgiveness, and Jesus' death is the foundation for the eschatological reconciliation of all things through judgment. The day of judgment will not be a day of wrath to be feared, but it will be, rather, the day when God's peace will finally begin. By condemning evil, Christ will create the preconditions for the universal kingdom of peace through a justice that brings healing.⁷⁵

Theology must cling to the concept of judgment because the victims of injustice can appeal finally only to God, and the world must be assured that God's justice and righteousness will be established in the end. People wait for a tribunal which will make righteousness prevail because, in a phrase Moltmann often repeats, "murderers must not be allowed to triumph over their victims for ever, [and] the innocent victims must not be forgotten."⁷⁶ Hope for judgment is trust that those who have been wronged or killed by injustice will be renewed and restored. Therefore, the concept of restorative justice is crucial for Moltmann's approach to judgment because the goal of judgment is not punishment but graceful reconciliation. Any judgment which does not lead to reconciliation and the healing of relationships is not related to the justice of God.

In this regard, Moltmann once again displays his special sensitivity toward the victims of history and those who have suffered wrongly from the hands of others. Temporal injustices must be answered by God's eternal justice. Judgment will be the ultimate act of grace for everyone, even for the perpetrators of injustice and violence.

⁷⁵ [The Judge] will finally bring justice to those who have never received justice, and will make the unjust just; which expects that he will 'slay' enmity for ever -- enmity, but not his enemies, whom he will transform through the power of his love, so as finally to set up the kingdom of peace without end. The purpose of Jesus' judgment is not retaliation in all directions. Its aim is to set up the kingdom of peace, founded on the righteousness and justice which overcomes all enmity. The law which this judge applies, we might say, is a law whose purpose is rehabilitation. The final judgment is at all events no more than the beginning of the new creation of all things, and must be viewed in this character Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 338.

⁷⁶ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 334.

Judgment is good news for the victims of evil as well as those who cause evil, and every violent act, every murder, and every act of selfishness will be condemned. Perpetrators of evil are just as enslaved by evil as victims, and through judgment everyone will be liberated and saved from destruction. God exercises creative power in judgment because through liberation from sin people will be transformed by God into whom they were created to be. For this reason, judgment is understood as a stage, or precondition, for God's over-riding purpose of establishing the eschatological kingdom.⁷⁷

As in Brunner's thought, behind all the implications of judgment for Moltmann lies the more important and larger implication of the doctrine of God. Moltmann's endorsement of universal salvation is based on a doctrine of God that views God, not as the judge *over and against* what he has created, but as *in favor* of his creation, despite the reality of evil. In judgment, God will reject the sin and evil that people have committed without rejecting them as the perpetrators of evil. Clearly, the goal of Moltmann's reflections on judgment is to argue in favor of universal salvation and the concept of divine judgment as grounds for establishing the universality of God's righteousness in all creation. The crux of the matter for Moltmann is that the outcome of judgment is not initially concerned with the status of individual people. Rather, what matters is the righteousness of God and the victory of God's justice over the sin and injustice of the world. Universal salvation emerges as the inevitable outcome of God's victory over all that opposes the Creator's will for humanity and all creation itself. If God will be "all-in-all," then whatever opposes God will not be annihilated, but, instead, will be purged and changed through the process of judgment. Moltmann declares that the issue of whether or not some are lost to God and eternally separated

⁷⁷ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 315-316. For a similar view, see John Hick, *Death and Eternal Life*, 265ff.

must be answered in a christological context and no other.⁷⁸ Moltmann fully embraces and advocates for universal salvation because the judgment that is prior to the new creation will purge the old creation, and all humanity, of its evil.⁷⁹

In stark contrast to Mackintosh and partly to Brunner, Moltmann hones in on several concepts of reconciliation and atonement in Scripture as a way of arguing in favor of universalism. Universal salvation hinges on God's promise to reconcile all things through the cross of Christ, and the divine restoration of everything means even those persons and powers who are opposed to God. Philippians 2 states that every knee will bow before God and every tongue will confess Christ as Lord to the glory of God. All enemies of Christ will be put under his feet, and God's kingdom will be consummated so that God may be all in all.⁸⁰ Moltmann claims that Paul's thought in 1st Corinthians dealing with resurrection does not discuss the possibility of a double outcome of judgment, and he believes that Paul's Adam-Christ typology works on the premise that humanity's condemnation through Adam is overcome by humanity's acquittal through Christ.

Moltmann agrees with Mackintosh that the reconciling God desires to save human beings through a relationship of faith. Both argue that the power of God's grace is not a compulsive force which compels people to choose God over and against their own will. Grace is the non-coercive power of love that calls people to faith and enables them to make a free decision in favor of God. Where Moltmann disagrees with Mackintosh is the way in which God's grace will work in judgment. God saves human beings, not by overpowering them, but by convincing them in love. Whereas Mackintosh believes that people will be able to resist God even in eternity, Moltmann

⁷⁸ Moltmann, "The Logic of Hell" in *God Will be All in All*, 43-47.

⁷⁹ So also argues J. A. T. Robinson, *In the End, God* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 108ff.

⁸⁰ Philippians 2:10-11 & 1st Corinthians 15:28.

believes that in eternity people will be gracefully led and inspired to choose in favor of God.

Moltmann rejects the idea that human beings control their own eternal destiny, and, as we saw in Brunner, the relationship between divine and human decisions is at stake in the debate about universal salvation. The question of God's sovereignty is crucial to the finality of "the decision" for salvation. Who is ultimately sovereign in deciding for or against salvation: a human being who chooses alienation or the loving God who wills reconciliation? To posit final destiny in the hands of human choice is a salvation-by-works scheme in which human beings control their own redemption:

If the decision, 'faith or disbelief' has eternal significance, then eternal destiny, salvation or damnation, lies in the hands of human beings. What will happen to people in eternity really depends on their own behavior.... Christ becomes a person's Savior only when that person has 'accepted' him in faith. So it is the acceptance in faith which makes Christ the Savior of men and women. But if this is so, do people not really save or damn themselves?⁸¹

The Son of God is a person's Savior long before he acknowledges it, just as God's grace works in a person's life before that person chooses a relationship with God in faith. God is control of each human's destiny; to say that a person chooses his own destiny makes that person his own God.

Leaning heavily on certain aspects of Pauline theology, Moltmann echoes Brunner by stating that God has *already* decided in favor of humanity in the dying and raising of Christ. The whole creation is the recipient of God's love, and the entire cosmos, rather than just a few elect, receives God's favor. A person's turning to God is only a response to the love previously given to humanity along with everything that receives God's blessing. Moltmann claims that rather than one's faith creating salvation, one's salvation is what creates faith. God's decision for humanity and any

⁸¹ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 244.

human decision for or against faith do not exist on the same plane of importance: God's gracious decision for humanity outweighs humanity's rejection of God through sin.

God's grace is more powerful than any human sin and any human decision, and God is angered by human sin precisely *because* he loves human creatures. God says a temporal "No" to human sin because God has already said an eternal "Yes" to human beings. God judges and condemns the sin of the world and of human beings in order to grant salvation, and God's judgment separates the sin from the person who sins. By condemning sin, God gives the person freedom from sin and new life. Some reject God while others have faith, but in the end all will be reconciled to God. The judgment and reconciliation of the world are not opposing concepts, and God's reconciliation with all things will be enacted through a judgment which reveals God's righteousness. God will put things right through judgment, so that God may gather all things to himself and exhibit the fullness of glory.

Jesus' death on the cross is the grounds on which Moltmann decides against a double outcome of judgment and in favor of universal salvation. Final judgment speaks about the means of the restoration of all things in the new creation, which is the consummated, eternal kingdom of God. Most importantly, it is the crucified Christ who is also the Judge of humanity. Christ himself was accused, in the place of human beings and for their sake. Jesus experienced the injustice of the world, and it will be this same Jesus who will distribute justice at the end of the world. The nature of this justice will be redemptive, not retaliatory, because redemptive justice is not bent on punishment but reconciliation. Christ's final justice creates righteousness, and it is in universal righteousness that all people will live in the consummated new creation:

What we call the Last Judgment is nothing other than the universal revelation of Jesus Christ, and the consummation of his redemptive work. No expiatory penal code will be applied in the court of the crucified Christ. No punishment of eternal death will be imposed. The final spread of the divine righteousness that creates justice serves the eternal kingdom of God, not the final restoration of a divine world order that has been infringed. Judgment at the end is not the end at all: it is the beginning. Its goal is the restoration of all things for the building up of God's eternal kingdom.⁸²

The divine righteousness which issues judgment has nothing to do with rewards and punishments like the courts of this world. God's justice is a righteousness that creates justice and puts people and circumstances right. God's judgment is, therefore, a process of a redemptive justice by which God establishes the triumph of his glorious kingdom. Eternity cannot contain what is evil within temporality.⁸³

We see that despite their disagreement over universal salvation, both Mackintosh and Moltmann sound a similar theme in their eschatological hopes for those who, for whatever reason, were never able to choose in favor of God through faith.⁸⁴ Moltmann possesses a strong sense of anxiety and sadness over those who may be 'lost' on account of violent or premature or unjust death. The hope of salvation is a hope as well for those who are the lost and the victims of history. Citing the atrocities and tragedies of history, Moltmann insists that final judgment is necessary for those who died unjustly because they deserve justice from the discerning Judge who takes into account the circumstances of people's lives and

⁸² Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 251.

⁸³ Compare with Tillich, who agrees with Moltmann regarding the eventual redemption of all: "Everything as created is rooted in the eternal ground of being. In this respect, non-being cannot prevail against it." Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University Press, 1951-63), 3:418.

⁸⁴ Pannenberg does not espouse universalism, but he offers hope for those never exposed to the message of Christ: "In their case what counts is whether their individual conduct actually agrees with the will of God that Jesus proclaimed. The message of Jesus is the norm by which God judges even in the case of those who never meet Jesus personally... Again, all to whom the Beatitudes apply will have a share in the coming salvation whether or not they have ever heard of Jesus. For factually they have a share in Jesus and his message, as the day of judgment will make manifest." One problem with Pannenberg's thought is the Jesus himself is central to the message he proclaimed.

history. Moltmann makes a moving appeal on behalf of those who were never allowed to live fully and whose lives were tragically cut short:

Think of the life of those who were not permitted to live, and were unable to live: the beloved child, dying at birth; the little boy run over by a car when he was four; the disabled brother who never lived consciously, and never knew his parents; the friend torn to pieces by a bomb at your side when he was sixteen; the throngs of children who die prematurely of hunger in Africa; the countless numbers of the raped and murdered and killed. Of course their lives can take on considerable meaning for others. But where will their own lives be completed, and how? Can they somewhere be healed, complemented, lived to the full and completed after they have died? The idea that for these people their death is 'the finish' would plunge the whole world into absurdity; for if their life has no meaning, has ours?⁸⁵

The dead who died unjustly or prematurely have, through Christ, the prospect of a "time" in which they may develop beyond their point of death. Eschatological judgment ensures that justice will be given to the people who were denied it in this life. Part of justice is the fulfillment of the potential of the lives that were cut short. Like Mackintosh, Moltmann affirms that these people have a future within the purposes of God because God is just and promises justice through judgment.

Resurrection, Time, and the New Age

For twentieth century eschatology, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the defining event that marks the beginning of the "new age" -- the dawning of a new era within history that nevertheless cannot be contained within history's parameters. The resurrection is the "first fruits" and guarantee of God's final victory over sin and death. If the death of Jesus is an eschatological event that changes humanity's

⁸⁵ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 118.

standing before God, the resurrection is a revelation of the eschatological future that awaits humanity. Indeed, the resurrection is the event which assures Christians of their future in the love of God.⁸⁶ While the cross is bound to the history of this world, the resurrection is an event that reveals the eschatological future because it ushers in a new era and new mode of being that is seen in Jesus but not yet experienced by humanity. The resurrected Jesus is no longer bound by time and space in the same way that the historical Jesus was. Each of our twentieth century theologians struggles with how to define resurrection in ways that break away from Enlightenment notions of historiography because the resurrection is a unique event that does not fit neatly into categories of historical thought. In many ways, their task is another revolt from nineteenth century attempts to dismiss Jesus on historical grounds based on the methods of historical research of that era. In the twentieth century, explaining the resurrection becomes an attempt to show how the future of God's kingdom is a present reality through the resurrection, even though the creation continues to wait for its final redemption through Christ. It is important for each theologian to break the molds of nineteenth century historiography in order to portray how the resurrection is a thoroughly eschatological event.

Mackintosh's presentation of the resurrection as an eschatological event is the designation of the resurrected Jesus as "the exalted Lord," and as he unpacks this phrase he describes how the risen Lord now exists in an exalted state above and beyond transience and death. Indeed, it is through and on account of the resurrection that Jesus is exalted to the position of Lord and Judge of the world. His Lordship over

⁸⁶ Macquarrie offers an unconvincing alternative when he states: "Suppose we omitted the 'joyful mysteries' that traditionally come after the cross? Would that destroy the whole fabric of faith in Christ Jesus? I do not think so, for the two great distinctive Christian affirmations would remain untouched – God is love and God is revealed in Jesus Christ. These two affirmations would stand even if there were no more mysteries beyond Calvary." John Macquarrie, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 412.

humanity and creation is verified and concluded through the resurrection, and throughout *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, Mackintosh operates under the assumption that the exalted Jesus is the starting point for christology. Our task is to evaluate Mackintosh's view of the resurrection as an historical event that transcends time.

For Mackintosh, the resurrection is the event from which Christian faith emerges, and it is the reality of Jesus as the exalted Lord which is the starting point from which all assertions about Jesus' incarnation, life, and death arise. Faith apprehends Jesus as the Risen One, and when one is encountered by Jesus, it is in the glory and exaltation that result from his resurrection. The Lord who lives and rules now is the object of Christian devotion and trust.⁸⁷ What makes the resurrection eschatological in nature is that it ushers in a new era, for Christ's own being, for the world, and his followers: "A new era opens with the resurrection. Certainly the risen Christ is the same person as formerly....At the same time Christ is now regarded in a light so new and all-transmuting that the old terms of description become inadequate."⁸⁸ It is the same-yet-new person who is viewed now in an eschatological light, and his resurrection signals the opening of a new era. But is it historical or atemporal? Is the resurrection an event in history like all others, or is it something beyond or outside the historical? Mackintosh believes that the resurrection grants to Christ a transcendence that was not his prior to the resurrection.

The point that Mackintosh is trying to make is that the resurrection allows for a union that present believers have with Christ that is not bound to time. Union with Christ trumps all historical attempts to disprove the resurrection from a strictly

⁸⁷ Mackintosh, *Person of Jesus Christ*, 363.

⁸⁸ Mackintosh, *Person of Jesus Christ*, 364.

historical point of view. The Christian's union with the exalted Lord is Mackintosh's answer to all who would rely on historical criticism of biblical texts to doubt the authenticity of the resurrection accounts. Redemption in the life of believers occurs only because Jesus is alive and reveals himself to men and women throughout history.⁸⁹ Mackintosh argues that union with Christ is proof enough for the historicity of the resurrection, but this question remains to ask of him: Is union with Christ alone verification enough that the resurrection is an eschatological event? Or, to ask the question another way of Mackintosh: Is the resurrection of Christ eschatological only in the lives of those who believe in him? One gains a sense from Mackintosh that "insiders" alone are the ones to whom the resurrection is real. This question must be asked of Mackintosh because he defines the eschatological nature of the resurrection along the lines of the benefits accrued to Jesus' followers on account of this event.

The weakness in Mackintosh's thought in this area is that he does not develop his theology of the resurrection to suggest how the new era ushered in by resurrection is a new era of faith and power beyond the lives of believers. He makes claims for the new eschatological age of without paying much attention given to redemption for the creation through resurrection -- a theme that becomes prominent later. The closest he comes to addressing the consequences for creation through resurrection is to say "we first recognize Christ as Lord within the range of individual person life, and expand this initial assurance later to universal and absolute dimensions..... In view of the indivisible unity of the cosmos, it is futile to represent the sway of Christ as

⁸⁹ "The power of His resurrection reveals itself as a present and universal activity, a reality on which men lean, and to whom they appeal in prayer. He gives a Divine life within the soul, and He sustains it. Union with him, not assent to a doctrine, is redemption. This is the distinctively Christian attitude to Christ, as it appears in the New Testament; and unless the records are of no value, it represents an estimate and a mode of behavior evoked in believers by the appearances of the risen Lord and the subsequent manifestation of the Spirit." Mackintosh, *Person of Jesus Christ*, 364.

embracing the Church but not the total universe."⁹⁰ It is unfortunate, however, that Mackintosh never expounds upon this theme, and one is left to wonder about what the resurrection means beyond the life of the individual and the church. Despite his one assertion for the totality of the resurrected Jesus' dominion over "the cosmos", Mackintosh focuses his thoughts on the resurrection only as it has significance in the lives of the faithful.

To define the resurrection as a transcendent, eschatological event, Mackintosh knows that he must connect Jesus' new life with the new, eternal life that believers will have after death. But Mackintosh has difficulty in stating how Christ's resurrection is related to the human person's resurrection and eternal life. Mackintosh deliberately reserves the term *resurrection* for Jesus' new life as a result of Easter, while he chooses the term *immortality* to serve as the descriptive term for a person's never-ending life in the presence of God.⁹¹ Mackintosh is reluctant to let go of a strictly materialistic view of the human body in relation to the soul. In a positive sense, Christ' resurrection and human immortality are closely linked because they both point to the God who is ultimately stronger than death. Death could not hold Jesus because Jesus is who God is, and behind the triumph of Easter stands the character of God, which is known by divine love. The same reality holds true for Christians because God's love is stronger than death for those who are united with God through Christ. In a negative sense, however, Mackintosh cannot affirm the resurrection of the body of a believer in the same way that he affirms the resurrection of Jesus' body.

⁹⁰ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 370.

⁹¹ A similar approach is made by P. T. Forsyth, who focuses on the creation of an immortal relationship between God and humanity through Christ's resurrection. See his *This Life and the Next: The Effect on this Life of Faith in Another* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1918), 68-69.

He prefers to speak of the resurrection of Jesus as a "test case" or as "proof" of the possibility of life after death. It does not prove eternal life as such, but it does display God's promise of life for God's beloved. Mackintosh regards Jesus' resurrection as illumination on how human immortality is a gift from God, and it is the resurrection of Christ that Christians offer as the basis of their belief: "The experience of Jesus was a test case, and like every test case, it fixed a principle. It did not create that principle; yet it decided what it should mean for the world."⁹² The resurrection is, in other words, an event that confirms the principle that God's love and power that are stronger than death. It is in this principle that Christians stake their hope for eternal life. If Jesus had not been resurrected, then any faith in eternal life through him would be difficult to maintain.

Jesus' resurrection signaled the resumption of the relationship between Jesus and God, and this helps Mackintosh define the importance of eternal life in terms of a relationship with God. Eternal life is fundamentally not about merely surviving after death. Eternal life is the condition of living forever in close fellowship with God.⁹³ Mackintosh draws on Pauline themes of resurrection and immortality to state that the real thrust of Christian theology regarding immortality is that there is life after physical death for the redeemed personality in union with God. The body disintegrates, but the human personality, which constitutes life, both life in this world and life in the next, is continuously maintained between these two realms of life. Mackintosh writes:

The whole man -- soul and body in living oneness -- connotes and embraces the effective human energies developed in and by his past life, controlled and unified by the self; and these energies, faith holds,

⁹² Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 178.

⁹³ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 172; See also John Baillie, *And the Life Everlasting* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), 250ff.

will after death retrieve and reassert themselves in forms not now imaginable. To use St. Paul's figure, out of the seed will spring a new ear of corn. The total efficacy of a life, considered as a force acting on environment, is unmeaning apart from organism; and this efficacy will not perish; it will resume elsewhere its tribute to the life of the Kingdom.⁹⁴

For Mackintosh, what matters most is the *efficacy of a life*, the personality which impacts its environment by acting and deciding, and this energetic efficacy of personality lives on with God after the body dies.⁹⁵

This line of reasoning points out a problematic area for Mackintosh because, as we have said, he believes in the unity of personality as a product of body and spirit. He cannot escape the conviction that "an outer mode of being," i.e. the body, is necessary for fellowship and the spiritual life, and he admits not being able to conjure up any notion of life without some form of body. Mackintosh refers to the part of human being that experiences eternal life as "the principle of individuality" and "the serviceable medium of spiritual commerce, in the absence of which souls 'unclothed upon' would share no life but their own."⁹⁶ Yet at the same time he denies the resurrection of the body. The fact that human bodies decompose is proof enough that the resurrection of the body cannot be believed in a literal sense. The tension in Mackintosh's thought arises from needing to maintain the possibility of fellowship between personalities, a prospect which requires spirit and body combined, and the stark experience that the physical body cannot be part of this union.

Mackintosh falls back on an argument that the empirical sciences cannot prove that eternal life is impossible or that human beings will not have some kind of existence in bodily form. Human sciences and psychologies are only entitled to say

⁹⁴ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 165.

⁹⁵ David Wiggins delineates the differences in identifying a person as "personality" and "body" in *Identity and Spatio-Temporal Continuity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 35-36.

⁹⁶ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 166.

that such a life is unimaginable to the limited human mind.⁹⁷ Theology's claim is that in the future life, personalities exist in a manner that is beyond the present human powers of conception, and this existence will be in some kind of bodily form. "Personality needs organs or conditions through which it is expressed," writes Mackintosh, "but from this it is a long step, and one which no law of thought bids us take, to say that no conditions but those now existing will serve...We commit no breach of logic, indeed, by holding that a higher type of organism may be in store for us, one more delicate and noble, better able to minister to or reveal the soul."⁹⁸ In this manner, Mackintosh can maintain the idea of personal contact and fellowship, because the individual, human personality will remain after death, yet he can also move beyond the notion of resurrection of the physical body.⁹⁹ His emphasis remains on the importance of individual personality in God's presence, and what form the body/soul unity will take is an open question that will be answered only in eternal life.

Brunner's thought regarding the resurrection goes farther than Mackintosh's to recast Jesus' resurrection as the dawning of a new era for humanity and the world. The resurrection of Jesus is the event that marks a decisive break between one age and another, and for Brunner the new era is the age of the glorified, exalted Lord. In a preliminary way, Brunner anticipates Moltmann by claiming that the resurrection is an eschatological event that emerges from beyond time and issues in a new eon, and for both theologians, the resurrection of Christ is closely connected to concept of the general resurrection of all the dead.

⁹⁷ This sweeping claim would not necessarily hold true today, as many discussions between science and theology demonstrate. See Nancey Murphy, *The Resurrection Body and Personal Identity, in Resurrection: Theological and Scientific Assessments*, 202-218.

⁹⁸ Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, 170.

⁹⁹ Forsyth echoes Mackintosh here in struggling to define the essence or nature of the resurrection body: "We take with us the character we have made. All discussion of what body we come in is beside the point; and we have no data. What happens to this physical body is indifferent to faith, and it is left to reverence....The idea of Resurrection is the integrating factor between this life and the next." Forsyth, *This Life and the Next*, 78.

Brunner sees that the Christian significance of the resurrection finds its roots in the eschatological expectations of the Old Testament, and Brunner is careful to point out the linkage between Old Testament eschatology and resurrection hope. Brunner reaches behind the New Testament to show how the resurrection fulfills Israel's messianic hopes for the reign of God. The history of Israel is the history of God's coming to the people collectively in order to save and make righteous. The coming of God is not meant to bring salvation to individuals alone: God comes into history through a people in order to bring redemption to all.¹⁰⁰ The significance of this for a Christian appreciation of resurrection is the communal salvation it brings for all. Private redemption is unheard of in the eschatological hopes of the Old Testament, and Brunner applies this same perception to the meaning of Jesus' resurrection. Eschatological hope established by the resurrection is a collective hope shared by the community of the faithful, of which individual hope is only a part of the whole.

For Brunner the resurrection is atemporal, and therefore it cannot be described in the normal terms that portray historical events. It does not fit neatly into the categories of human experience by which we empirically observe and analogically describe events.¹⁰¹ There is nothing to which we may compare the resurrection, and because it is something completely unique it breaks the categories of history and also the post-Enlightenment methods of historical inquiry and description. This is an important point because it serves as the foundation by which historical criticism is thwarted as a means of "disproving" the resurrection. If the resurrection of Christ is impossible to prove, it is because it is an event that comes to history from the

¹⁰⁰ Brunner, *The Mediator*, 565.

¹⁰¹ Ladd offers a similar rationale in his statement that "although it was an event in history, Jesus' resurrection had no antecedent historical cause – a sequence which the historian assumes." George E. Ladd, *I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 21.

eschatological future and defies the categorization of history. The resurrection narratives attempt to describe in limited language how Easter morning is the first day of the new age of Christ's transcendent Lordship:

For our part we would prefer to interpret the manifold discrepancy of the Easter reports as an indication that the fact to which they bear witness is in the strict sense of the word eschatological; that is, the beginning of the advent of the eternal consummation, of the life of the world to come, which cannot be grasped in the categories proper to this space-time world. The resurrection of Jesus is as an event the utterly incomprehensible and transcendent, the beginning of the Parousia, of which the -- one might say -- obvious characteristic is its incomprehensibility, its non-co-ordinability, the utter impossibility of expressing it in the terms of our thought and ideas.... In any event, the common feature of all these resurrection reports is that He who died on the Cross has revealed Himself to his believers as the Living Lord. Therefore with Easter day the new aeon has dawned.¹⁰²

The resurrection remains so elusive to our framework of understanding because it represents the in-breaking of the eternity of God into our realm of space and time, and we have no categories of description beyond our usual experiences that can accurately described what has happened in the resurrection. This is the rationale by which Brunner, like Moltmann later, will sidestep historical criticism and its attempts to disprove the resurrection on historical grounds. To those who cast doubt on the historicity of resurrection, Brunner replies that they are correct: the resurrection cannot be "proven" or analyzed like other events in history because it is non-historical.

Brunner appeals to the same line of thought manifested by Mackintosh when he claims that belief in the resurrection is not to be gained from examining the narratives of scripture that describe the empty tomb or even the post-resurrection appearances to the eye witness apostles. It is the Living Lord who currently manifests

¹⁰² Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 144-145.

his presence through the Spirit to people today. The biblical texts alone can never convey knowledge or trust in the resurrection. It is only as Jesus reveals himself to people that they come to believe in the event written about in Scripture.¹⁰³ In this way, Brunner categorizes the resurrection along the lines of revelation, meaning that the revelation of the risen Lord to the apostles is the same as his revelation to people today. This is the way that the resurrection must be apprehended -- as a revelation that proves itself through the self-testimony of Christ through the Spirit.¹⁰⁴ Otherwise, according to both Mackintosh and Brunner, there will always be skepticism about the truth of the event. For both of them, the truth of the event lies not in the past but in the present experience and relationship of the believer with Christ.

In his appeal to present experience as confirmation of the resurrection, Brunner notes that the life of believers in the church is an example of the eschatological power of Christ's resurrection. Christians have a share in Christ's resurrection because it is the empowering event which makes the Church's existence eschatological in itself:

The existence of the Ekklesia, life in the Holy Spirit and His gifts -- these are signs and results of the world of Resurrection which is already invading the present. That which is future and eternal has become present. The existence of the Christ-community is 'messianic' or 'eschatological' existence, life in the presence of God in the midst of the stream of time, God's kingdom in the midst of the world of sin and death.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ "It is not the historical credibility of the Resurrection narratives which bears witness to Christ, but the self-testimony of Christ conveys to the believer all the historical credibility of these narratives. Hence to all those who read these narratives only with the interest of students of secular history they will always remain incredible, whereas faith will be undisturbed by all historical criticism." Brunner, *The Mediator*, 575.

¹⁰⁴ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 370-371.

¹⁰⁵ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 3, 411.

What this means for Brunner's theology is difficult to gauge because he implies that humanity lives not between the times as concurrent in two times: in the time death and in eternal life, in temporality and in eternity, in sin and in redemption. Brunner denies this however, claiming that Christians live wholly in a new era, although only in its beginning stages.¹⁰⁶ Yet his statements regarding sin and evil dictate that this cannot be the case. He confusingly speaks both of the reality of the new eon as well as our expectation of it, both in the present tense. Resurrection life belongs to the Christian only in hidden form and not fully manifested, which signals an internal doubt in Brunner regarding the complete reality of the new age.¹⁰⁷

Brunner approaches the concept of the resurrection of the dead in a way that Moltmann will develop further, yet for both there is a close link between Jesus' eschatological resurrection and the eschatological resurrection of all. The resurrection of Christ is the beginning of a new era which will reach consummation when the dead are raised to new life.¹⁰⁸ Unlike Moltmann, who speaks in terms of all the dead, Brunner usually applies the concept of resurrection only to those who believe in and follow Christ.¹⁰⁹ Exactly how the dead in Christ are to be resurrected pales in comparison with the firm belief that it shall happen. When it happens, the resurrection of the dead will signal the final transformation of Christ's followers into

¹⁰⁶ This means Christians recognize that they live within both the old and the new age. See Martin Debelius, *Paul*, ed. W. G. Kümmel, trans. F. Clarke (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), 62. For Bultmann, the church finds itself in the awkward position of belonging to the new age while manifesting itself in the present age. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:308.

¹⁰⁷ Brunner fails to develop the ways in which God's creative act in resurrection goes beyond this present creation and how the new creation replaces this present creation at the specific point of the resurrection. See Schwartz, *Eschatology*, 285.

¹⁰⁸ In this way Brunner sees that the resurrection of Christ cannot be separated from the apocalyptic view of history with its anticipation of the resurrection of the dead at the end. See also Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, trans. D. Granskou (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 146.

¹⁰⁹ Joseph E. Kokjohn, "A Hell of a Question," *Commonweal* 93 (January 1971), 370. Kokjohn proposes that the resurrection is not a valid hope for those not united to Christ. Their future is simply "is simply one of non-existence, not only the isolation from other people and God, but the utter alienation from all other forms of life."

his image and into the glory of God. The key concept guiding the resurrection of the dead is the love of God that transforms Christians from a "being unto death" into a "being unto life." The resurrection of the dead is the consummate sign of God's love for his creatures, and this love reaches a pinnacle in the sharing of God's glory in resurrection life.

Following Mackintosh Brunner bases all hope for the individual in eternal life on the Christological foundation of Jesus' resurrection, and he believes that Jesus' resurrection is the absolutely unique, historical event which provides the foundation for all personal eschatology. The Christian's resurrection to eternal life is relative to Jesus' resurrection, from which all hope emerges.¹¹⁰ Brunner makes this connection by linking the Easter event with God's inauguration of a new and utterly immeasurable mode of being—human being unto eternal life. Jesus' resurrection was the event through which God initiated the operation of new life within creation, and this life is eternal life -- unending life in the presence of the eternal God. The introduction of this form of life within the world marked the beginning of creation's consummation and fulfillment.¹¹¹ On Easter day the new age was born, and with it came the reality of resurrection life for believers in Christ.

All that the Christian can hope for regarding resurrection is grounded firmly in the example given by God through Christ, and any other route to a doctrine of eternal life is not plausible. It is Jesus' resurrection to bodily existence which provides the model for human resurrection. Brunner writes:

Jesus is not awakened again to physical life according to the Resurrection narratives, but to a spiritual corporeality which on the one hand manifests itself in spatial limits, on the other, overcomes the

¹¹⁰ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, v. 2, 366.

¹¹¹ Brunner, *The Mediator*, 579.

limitations of space. This encounter with Jesus, who is both recognizable as the same and is free from the conditions of material corporeality, lies at the basis of [Paul's] idea of the *soma pneumaticon*. This idea also expresses the wholeness of the person as an individuality created by God and named by him. I, this particular individual, am called of God; I, this specific non interchangeable man, am to rise again.¹¹²

Jesus' existence is marked by a clear distinction between his pre-crucifixion life and his post-resurrection life, and this distinction is the key for understanding human resurrection. Brunner's relies on the Pauline concept of the pneumatic body described in 1st Corinthians 15 to illumine his interpretation of the gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection. Brunner concedes that a "pneumatic body" is paradoxical in a literal sense, as well as being highly mysterious, but this mode of being characterizes the gospel accounts of Jesus' post-resurrection life.

Brunner relies so heavily on the notion of a spiritual body because it allows him to maintain the sense of personhood that he believes characterizes the human-divine relationship. Following Mackintosh's thought, Brunner insists that corporeality is necessary for personality and communal relationships, yet Brunner moves beyond Mackintosh in explaining the importance of some bodily form for eternal life. Because a person is always a unity of body and soul, in resurrection life one holds on to the personal features which make him or her unique. A person remains a responsible, decision-making being even through death. By insisting on the resurrection of a person in a spiritual body, Brunner precludes any dichotomous division of the self regarding eternal life. Just as Brunner will not allow a division of the self regarding personality, sin, or death, neither does he allow the self to be

¹¹² Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 149.

dissected in resurrection. The whole person sins and dies in relation to God, but so also will the whole person live before God in resurrection.

Brunner appeals to pragmatic logic in regard to the physical properties of the human body, and although all people shall indeed rise in their own, interchangeable personality, the physical body shall not arise. We see Brunner struggling here as Mackintosh did with the difficulties of what type of bodily form human life will take after death. At this point, Brunner runs into difficulty regarding his doctrine of resurrection because he leaves several paradoxes unresolved. First, regarding the pneumatic body, anything bodily necessarily implies material existence, and anything spiritual implies non-material existence. Yet for Brunner the pneumatic body is the means by which our individual creatureliness shall be maintained in the eternal presence of God. What is the difference between Brunner's concept of a pneumatic body and a broad definition of the soul? If the pneumatic body is a spiritual existence, then it becomes only remotely connected to one's bodily, physical existence. Second, Brunner's logic presents great problems in regard to Jesus' resurrection. If human resurrection is patterned on his, and if the human body rises in spiritual form while the physical decomposes, what does this mean for Jesus' bodily resurrection? The gospel narratives are clear that the physical body of Jesus was raised to new life, albeit a different kind of life from before his crucifixion. The resurrection narratives imply that Jesus' resurrection life is a combination of both physical and spiritual existence. According to Brunner's thought, one of two things must be true. Either Jesus' was raised in a spiritual body, and his physical body remained in the tomb to decompose, thereby annulling the gospel accounts, or human resurrection is not the same as Jesus' bodily resurrection.

One of Moltmann's greatest contribution to twentieth century eschatology is clearly his emphasis on the resurrection as the single, transforming event in world history. Indeed, from *Theology of Hope* forward, the resurrection of Christ signifies the hermeneutical lens through which Moltmann would initiate the paradigm shift in theology toward a future-oriented eschatology. All of the century's redoubled efforts in the field of eschatology find their culmination in Moltmann's interpretation of the resurrection as the beginning of God's triumph over evil, injustice, death, and sin. The resurrection of Christ is closely tied to the concept of the promise of God, and it is through the resurrection that Moltmann ascertains the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, the church, and to all creation.

In addition to drawing on Old Testament eschatological hopes as a precursor to resurrection, Moltmann approaches the concept of resurrection by plunging into the depths of the modern experience, as propounded by Hegel and Nietzsche, that "God is dead." The problems of the historicity of the resurrection manifest themselves in the despair of modern life. All questions and doubts related to the modern philosophic and scientific denials of the resurrection have at their heart the profound experience that the resurrection cannot be ascertained as a reality based on history. The history to which humanity is subjected is one of suffering, death, and nihilism, and out of this history no proof of the resurrection can be garnered by human experience.¹¹³

For Hegel, the god-forsakenness of history is represented in the expansion of Good Friday from merely the death of Jesus to the speculative Good Friday that represents all of humanity's forsakenness. Good Friday is representative of all

¹¹³ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 170. The inability to prove the resurrection through previous experience is one factor that led to Schweitzer's proposal of the resurrection as a psychological phenomenon that occurred within the disciples. Schweitzer, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, 284-285.

humanity's existence in death and nothingness, and Christ's god-forsaken death is symbolic of humanity's atheism in the absence of God. Coupled with this Hegelian approach, Nietzsche revels in the antagonistic claims of God's death through which humanity finally exalts itself above the superstition of theism that holds humanity back from realizing its true potential. Humanity comes to itself in the realization that God is dead, and God's death is humanity's ultimate triumph. The result of both nihilistic approaches, for Moltmann, is humanity's descent into nothingness, and for this reason he seeks to redress modern nihilism through a new interpretation of the resurrection of Jesus.

The main question for modern history is whether or not the resurrection is possible according to the norms of history and human experience as understood in post-Enlightenment categories. The resurrection is a problem for modern conceptions of history that are based on experience, probability, and laws of nature.¹¹⁴ Moltmann's main point is that the resurrection of Jesus is the beginning of a new history, a history that is not based on previous experiences of history as known through human inquiry and past experiences.¹¹⁵ Jesus' resurrection opens up a new horizon and a new age that contradicts the former age of death.¹¹⁶

The resurrection makes its own new form of history because it breaks decisively and forever with the old history of the world and its sin and death. To make this point clear, Moltmann relies on the dialectical connection between the cross and the resurrection as two parts of the one Christ event that both link and separate the

¹¹⁴ Moltmann, *Way of Jesus Christ*, 229.

¹¹⁵ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 175.

¹¹⁶ "The resurrection of Christ does not mean a possibility within the world and its history, but a new possibility altogether for the world, for existence and for history.... In view of what is meant and what is promised when we speak of the raising of Christ, it is therefore necessary to expose the profound irrationality of the rational cosmos of the modern, technico-scientific world. By the raising of Christ, we do not mean a possible process in world history, but the eschatological process to which world history is subjected." Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 179-180.

old history of the world from the new.¹¹⁷ The resurrection is a radical antithesis to the cross, even though they are united in the person of Christ. The crucifixion is defined by the categories of death and sin that mark existence in the world, but the resurrection is an apocalyptic event that does not belong to history. It belongs to the new history of God's redemption:

The cross and the resurrection stand in the same relation to one another as death and eternal life. Since death makes every life historical, death has to be seen as the power of history. Since resurrection brings the dead into eternal life and means the annihilation of death, it breaks the power of history and is itself the end of history. If we keep the two together, then the cross of Christ comes to stand at the apocalyptic end of world history, and the raising of the dead at the beginning of a new creation of the world.¹¹⁸

What Moltmann begins in *Theology of Hope* is expanded and strengthened in *The Way of Jesus Christ* as he describes the resurrection as the eschatological event through which God brings the fulfillment of his promises, thus creating an eschatological history that breaks the pattern of world history.¹¹⁹

The key concept guiding God's creation of this new, eschatological history is the righteousness of God that signals the fulfillment of his promises. Christ's sinless life and humiliating death are vindicated by the righteousness of God that seeks to bring the same righteousness to creation. The resurrection verifies God's promises of justice and righteousness for all people in that Christ's resurrection is the first fruits of the resurrection of all the dead to meet God's righteousness. The righteousness of God creates a new world which, although not yet fully visible, is yet in the process of renewing creation. Here we see that Moltmann again relies on the concept of promise

¹¹⁷ Moltmann connects the two events without going as far as Bultmann who claims that "the cross and resurrection form a single, indivisible cosmic event." Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," in *Kerygma and Myth*, 39.

¹¹⁸ Moltmann, *Way of Jesus Christ*, 214.

¹¹⁹ The same insight into the proleptic nature of the resurrection provided by Pannenburg in *Jesus -- God and Man*, trans. L. L. Wilkins and D. A. Priebe (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), 66-67.

as the key to interpreting what resurrection means for history. The resurrection is significant for the future that it opens up for creation.¹²⁰ The resurrection creates a new history that is subject to the eschatological promise of God.¹²¹ Christ was raised ahead of all the dead as a sign of God's righteous victory on behalf of creation over deathly, historical existence.¹²² Jesus' resurrection becomes the lens through which we look to see the redemption of God. The resurrection, however, forces us to look forward into the end of history to see the fullness of this redemption because the future receives its direction from the event of resurrection.¹²³

A crucial point for Moltmann, however -- and this brings us back to the category of promise -- is that belief in Christ's resurrection is contingent upon the resurrection of all the dead. Jesus' resurrection is not an historical fact but an eschatological promise because it is tied to the hope of the resurrection of all human beings.¹²⁴ The resurrection of Jesus finds its most descriptive language in the category of hope while the world is still marked by violence and death. The resurrection of Christ is a hoped-for fact that is dependent upon the eschatological resurrection of all the dead and the creation of a new world.

For Moltmann, the resurrection of the dead is *the* object of Christian hope for the individual's future. It asserts that all hope is possible, not on account of inherent human possibilities, but only on account of the God who can call into being things that are not and who can raise the dead, like the crucified Christ, to new life.

¹²⁰ This point is made clearly by Künneth as well. Walter Künneth, *The Theology of the Resurrection*, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM Press, 1965), 164-166.

¹²¹ Richard Bauckham, *Moltmann: Messianic Theology*, 33.

¹²² Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 163.

¹²³ See Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of Saint Luke*, trans. G. Buswell (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 16-17.

¹²⁴ Like Pannenberg, Moltmann cannot envision the resurrection of Christ outside of its proleptic anticipation for the resurrection of all. See Pannenberg, *Jesus – God and Man*, trans. L. L. Wilkins and D. A. Priebe (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), 81-82.

Christians look forward with longing to resurrection life because they await God's final victory over the powers of death and sin. The object of eschatological hope for an individual life is the resurrection of the whole person -- body and soul, physical and immaterial -- from death. The resurrection of the dead, however, has far-reaching consequences beyond a life after death, and the signs of eternal life manifest themselves in the temporal here and now. What we find in Moltmann is a more decisive contribution to understanding of the resurrection of the body

Moltmann sees that the foundation of hope for resurrection in the Old Testament lies in Israel's understanding of the attributes of God, while the New Testament relies on the resurrection of Jesus as the defining event that gives resurrection its meaning. Moltmann reaches far back into scripture in order to understand how the New Testament expectations of resurrection are founded on the Old Testament's understanding of the nature of God. Israel's faith is grounded in the God who calls things into being out of nothing. Israel trusted God as the deliverer from death, and there are examples in Hebrew scriptures of those, like the Psalmist, who cry out to God to rescue them from death. While the Old Testament does not possess a doctrine of resurrection, of life after death, it does express hope for new life and for deliverance from deathly powers in the present. God alone is the one who has the power to bring people and the Israelite nation to new life. Later Israelite eschatology serves as a bridge to the New Testament because it presents a hope for new life that reaches beyond death, as well as the conquest and end of death itself.

Built on the foundation of the Old Testament, Christian faith is shaped by the experience of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and by the resurrected Christ's appearances. All Christian statements concerning the resurrection of individuals must emerge from christological reflections on the resurrection of Jesus.

Although it occurred within the scope of history, Christ's resurrection was not an historical event. It was, rather, an eschatological occurrence that happened to the crucified Christ.

From this, Moltmann ascertains that resurrection is not a return to this or any mortal life, but it is an entry into a life that is eternal. The eschatological event of Christ's resurrection has vicarious significance for all of humanity: "If Christ has been raised from the dead, then he takes on a proleptic and representative significance for all the dead."¹²⁵ The New Testament views the resurrected Christ as the first-born of the dead, and the process of the resurrection of the dead has begun with Jesus' resurrection, a process that will be completed with in the raising of those who are his and, indeed, of all the dead. Since questions of the resurrection of the dead are answered christologically, Moltmann states that resurrection must be anticipated as an event which involves the whole person, giving life to mortal bodies as well as spirit.

Moltmann affirms the biblical promise of the resurrection of the dead as a contrary notion to the concept of an immortal soul, mainly because the resurrection of the body is based not on human capabilities, as an immortal soul would suggest, but on the power and promise of God alone. Belief in the resurrection of the dead signifies a trust in God who creates out of nothing and who can make the dead live again as part of the overall defeat of death in the Kingdom of God. Eternal life is nothing less than life lived in the love and glory of God, and affirmation of the resurrection is a parallel affirmation of the love of God toward his creatures. Jesus' resurrection is the beginning of the resurrection of all, and Christ's resurrection is the beginning of process which will be completed when all are raised.

¹²⁵ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 69.

The raising of the dead presupposes the death of the human person, but death does not automatically mean the end of the dead person's identity. God is able to identify each of the dead in order to raise them, and because there is a direct continuity in the identity of the dead, resurrection must be viewed as a transformation and not an entirely new creation. The events which comprise one's life remain eternally in the memory and perception of God. Although it sounds contradictory, it is a new creation of the same personality for the eternal life that is shared with God. God maintains one's personal identity through resurrection in order to transform that person with perfection.

If death signifies the total destruction and disintegration of a person, including relationships, then resurrection means the power to unify all aspects of a personality in a redeemed life. Moltmann displays a special sensitivity not seen in Mackintosh and Brunner when he states that the resurrection of the body means the rectification of the mistakes one has made over the course of a lifetime. Through resurrection a person is redeemed in all aspects of life, spiritually and materially, and one's relationships are redeemed in the inclusion of the person into a community of eternal love.

Whereas Mackintosh and Brunner concentrate mainly on the Christological aspects of resurrection and eternal life, Moltmann adds a pneumatological dimension that strengthens the connection between temporal life and eternal life, and the Holy Spirit is the vital link between God and human beings in life and beyond death. Moltmann describes the Holy Spirit's role in resurrection and transformation because it is the Spirit of God who brings the whole person into relationship with God and who brings God into the entire fabric of that person's life. The Spirit becomes the link between the already-raised Jesus and the yet-to-be-raised dead. The Spirit of God is

related to the whole of human existence, body and soul together, and so it is that the whole person is to be raised in the Spirit through resurrection.

In humans, the Spirit of life shapes the mutual interdependence between body and soul, and through the Holy Spirit, God is in relation with a person's whole life. The whole is an integrated organism constituted of the unquantifiable sum of the parts. The Holy Spirit is related to the totality of a person's whole being. As a united entity, a human being is more than the sum of his organs; organs are more than the sum of their cells; cells more than the sum of their molecules, etc. Moltmann describes a person's totality of existence as his or her *Gestalt*. The sum of a person, the *Gestalt*, disintegrates at the moment of death, but the whole outcome of a person's life nevertheless remains always in God's view, and the individual *Gestalt* is remembered by God. One's *Gestalt* remains in God's vision, and the whole remains within God's memory even if the constituent parts dissolve: "Through the disintegration of the parts -- which we call dying, death and corruption -- the person's lived *Gestalt* -- will be transformed into the other form of living which we call 'eternal life'... Relationship before God is always whole relationship."¹²⁶ God deals with human beings in their total personal identity, and just as there can be no bodiless soul, neither can there be a soul-less body. It is with the whole human personality that God forms the immortal relationship, and it is the whole person who will be raised to newly-created life through resurrection. Like the risen Christ who was recognizable by the marks of the nails in his hands, human beings, after resurrection, will still be recognizable from the configuration of all events and circumstances of their life. Jesus' crucified body was transfigured in the glory of God through his resurrection

¹²⁶ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 76.

from the dead, and so also will the *Gestalt* of people's lives be returned, transfigured, and redeemed through resurrection into God's kingdom

Developing the thought of Brunner further, Moltmann describes how the raising of the dead is the personal side of the cosmic event which is the annihilation of death. The two sides belong together because there is no resurrection of the dead to new life without the new earth in which death will be no more.¹²⁷ Moltmann's theory of resurrection is the most advanced because he paints on a broad canvass when he portrays the resurrection of the flesh as all flesh beyond human bodies, including animals and all living things within creation.¹²⁸ A theology of resurrection which limits itself only to individuals misses the wider New Testament emphasis on the more universal impact of Christ's resurrection. Moltmann writes:

Eternal life consequently embraces this person, and this person wholly, body and soul; and, beyond this person, it applies to all the living, so that in that future world the creation that 'groans' under transience (Rom. 8:19-21) will also be delivered, because there will be no more death. Hope for the resurrection of the dead is therefore only the beginning of a hope for a cosmic new creation of all things and all conditions. It is not exhausted by personal eschatology. On the contrary, every personal eschatology that begins with this hope is constrained to press forward in ever-widening circles to cosmic eschatology.¹²⁹

The resurrection of the individual is only one aspect of the wider significance of creation's resurrection. One person's resurrection is indicative of a larger process of cosmic redemption which is initiated by the resurrection of Jesus.

In the perfection and consummation of creation, however, death will be no more through the transformation of creation, and it is with this concept in mind, rather than annihilation, that Moltmann discusses the end of death. The annihilation of

¹²⁷ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 69.

¹²⁸ A similar argument for the resurrection of creation is presented in W. Pannenberg, *The Apostles Creed in Light of Today's Questions*, Margaret Kohl, trans. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972).

¹²⁹ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 70.

death relies completely on a negation of the negative, yet unlike creation's final redemption from death, nothing positive can emerge from simply the negation of the negative. In contrast to Brunner, who describes the ways in which death will die and "not-being" will no longer be, Moltmann makes the critical distinction between the *annihilation* of death and the *transformation* of death.

Transformation comes out of resurrection, and it is with the resurrection of the dead that eternal life, which is not subject to transience, is bestowed upon created beings. In resurrection life, people will live within the eternal presence of God, and in the presence of such eternal life, death loses all its power. Through resurrection one form of life gives way to another, eternal form: "The raising of the dead is conceived as a great metamorphosis of life: God who makes all things new is going to make out of life in its humble, frail, and mortal form a transfigured, glorious *Gestalt* which will completely and utterly match his intention. The negation of life, and the negative which thrusts from death into life, will be transformed into something wholly positive."¹³⁰ Moltmann's focus on transformation of even the negative aspects of life allows him to affirm the eschatological belief that in the end all things will have worked together for good (Romans 8.28), even things which have been tragic and incomprehensible.

It is at this juncture of the "already-not yet" that I find confusion in Moltmann's presentation of the resurrection as the beginning of a new age of history. Moltmann states that the resurrection of Jesus is an apocalyptic event that initiates the new history of redemption in which God is glorified in righteousness. Yet in the same breath he acknowledges that the world continues to exist in the old manifestation of sin and death. By latching on to the biblical language of the resurrection of Jesus as

¹³⁰ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 84.

the "pledge" of the resurrection of all, Moltmann hopes to describe the resurrection of Jesus a process by which all creation is renewed. For him, the resurrection of Jesus is a promise of a history life in the midst of the current history of death. The problem within his logic is that he seems to be advocating for two simultaneous histories running concurrent with each other: the old history of death and the new history of resurrection life. On the one hand, he believes that the resurrection put an end to the old history, yet on the other hand he acknowledges that the old history still exists and awaits redemption.

This contradiction exists in Moltmann's thinking because he is trying to refute positivist approaches to history that judge the veracity of events on sensory judgments and previous experience. For him, since the resurrection is something new in history, it must signal a new type of history -- the eschatological history of the fulfillment of God's promises. What is more convincing and more logical is to affirm the newness of the resurrection while not shying away from the reliability of historical inquiry. In this sense, the resurrection need not be dissected from Christ's life and even his death. The division drawn by Moltmann between the crucifixion and the resurrection, between the history of death and the history of life, is helpful in describing the difference between the two events, but as a whole, they are linked together in the overall, eschatological mission of Jesus. If Jesus' incarnation and whole life (and death and resurrection) are viewed as one event with different parts, then his resurrection is seen to be a continuation of the eschatological mission of the Son to reconcile humanity to God and God to humanity. The resurrection of Jesus is as eschatological his incarnation and death because together they form the manner in which God is fulfilling his promises to redeem humanity. One gains a sense that Moltmann is acquiescing to the complaints of historical criticism that deny the

reliability of the biblical accounts in describing the resurrection as an event that occurred in history because it cannot be "proven."

The most unique contribution that Moltmann makes that distinguishes him from Mackintosh and Brunner is his development of the connection between the resurrection of Jesus and its corresponding meaning for the resurrection of creation. This is a crucial step in the progression of eschatology in the twentieth century because he highlights the heretofore neglect of theology in addressing ecological concerns and creation's place in the history of salvation. Moltmann insists that theology must move beyond mere human history to demonstrate the consequences of the resurrection "in the perspective of nature." Moltmann moves in the direction of a historical-ecological theology of rebirth for creation by drawing heavily on the biblical images of rebirth and the Spirit's role in effecting a renewal for creation.

The two metaphors from scripture that Moltmann relies on are that of the planted seed and the birthing mother, and he uses these images to describe creation's transformation, or resurrection, into the new creation. Moltmann relies on the Pauline image of resurrection found in the concept of the grain of wheat from 1 Corinthians 15, and what is planted does not in fact die but grows into a new entity. Likewise a woman in labor travails through pains in order to bring new life out of current life. These metaphors from nature speak not so much about a rupture between death and life but about a transition from one form of life to another. These images from the natural world are applied to the resurrection of Christ, and in doing so they speak not of the end of life in death, but rather of Christ's transformation from one form of life to another: "These images present death and life, not as a breaking off and a new beginning, but as a *transition*. Mortal bodies come alive, lowly bodies are

transfigured, violated bodies are glorified. Dying and coming to life are two elements in the transformation process of the new creation of all things."¹³¹ From this conclusion, Moltmann opens up an analogy by which he states that nature itself participates in the resurrection of Christ through a transition by which creation will be transformed and reborn into a new creation.

The transition of Christ through resurrection has cosmic consequences for all of creation in that the raised body of Jesus is a pledge for the resurrection of all matter and its transformation through resurrection into a new form of existence. Neither Mackintosh nor Brunner approach this line of thinking regarding the connection between Christ's resurrection and the transformation of creation. The bodily resurrection of Jesus signifies the goodness of all physical life, human and non-human, and just as Christ's body was healed through resurrection, so also will creation be healed. The resurrection of Christ is a promise that all created life will be resurrected, i.e. transformed in the kingdom of God.

¹³¹ Moltmann, *Way of Jesus Christ*, 249-250.

Conclusion:

Redefined Time

Throughout this thesis, I have attempted to analyze a redefinition of time in its relationship to eternity in twentieth century eschatology. First, I sought to show why I believe a dynamic/tensed view of reality is preferable over a static/tenseless view. Philosophers, theologians, and scientists have engaged in much dialogue over the last one hundred years about which interpretation is a more apt description of reality, and I have claimed that the dynamic view is better. This preference is based on our inability to eliminate tense from our experiences of temporal life and our descriptions of it. By choosing in favor of a dynamic view of time and reality, I have stated my belief that all experiences are best understood through the categories of tense: past, present, and future. We cannot avoid using tense to describe the world because the world, i.e. reality, is itself tensed.

Neither can we avoid using tense when speaking of God because God's own eternal life is dynamic. We have examined the classical argument for a timeless God and found it to be wanting because it negates change and becoming in the relationship between God and temporal creation and creatures. To say that God is timeless, as we have seen is the claim of classical theology, is to rob God of the ability and desire to engage people and to act graciously toward them. A static, timeless God is immutable and impassable, among other things, because he is incapable of changing even toward that which he loves. Indeed, the nature of God's love itself is called into question if one stridently maintains that God is timeless. I have attempted to show, through the work of Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann, that a redefinition of God's eternity has

taken place within contemporary theology that allows for the claim that in his eternity, God's life includes change, becoming, and passion in his relationship with creation and with human creatures in particular.

God's dynamic, changing eternal life has been especially visible when we look closely at the events of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection and see them as eschatological events that incorporate aspects of both time and eternity. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ must be examined as eschatological events because they are dependent upon a dynamic view of temporality, yet they are equally dependent upon the larger eschatological backdrop of God's purposes for humanity along with all of creation. The incarnation was an historical event which our three theologians, despite sometimes speaking in contradictory terms, describe as the uniting of time and eternity. They share a mutual dissatisfaction with the early church's two-natures theory of incarnation, yet they recognize that the early church was struggling to find adequate ways to unite two radically different entities: humanity and divinity. We would now add that part of this difficulty centers on the time-eternity relationship and the early church's assumption of the incompatibility of the two. What we see, with a dynamic view of both time and eternity, is that the two are not nearly so incompatible as early church history would have us believe. In fact, part of the redefinition of time within the twentieth century has relied on the fact that the incarnation reveals eternity as the ground of time and inclusive of it. In his eternity, God is capable of experiencing the temporality of creation, and he does so through the Son's incarnation. To see God's interaction with creatures within temporality through the incarnation is to connect God to history in important ways. We see God as the Lord of history who redeems it from within creation. We are then permitted to see how time itself is part of creation and God's resolve and power to call

into being things that are not. Time is an element of creation, disposable in the hands of God who can use the events of time to bring reconciliation about between God and humanity.

The crucifixion, likewise, must be seen through eschatological lenses if it is to be understood correctly. It is this event, more than any other, which allows our three theologians to disregard the classical definition of God's impassability. Contrary to being dispassionately unaffected by human sin, suffering, and death, God experiences all of these through the cross of Christ. The cross is God's way of taking up and experiencing the suffering that is part of human life. This suffering is due partly to the transience of life that all human's experience, but more than transience, suffering is caused by sin and injustice. The human experience of time is one that inevitably ends in death. Along the way toward death, while there are good things and occasions to be joyful about, our experience of time is such that it causes regret and fear in relation to the past and future. More than regret and fear, our experience of time is one of alienation from God, which for some is the godforsakenness of injustice and tragedy. The cross is God's way of experiencing these temporal events in order to redeem us from our temporal alienation from God through sin and suffering.

The resurrection of Jesus is the event which straddles the "boundary" between time and eternity. It is an event that our theologians categorize as both temporal and atemporal. It is historical in the sense that it happened just as other events do, and therefore it belongs to time and space like everything else in history. It is non-historical in the sense that Jesus is a different person after his resurrection. The resurrection is the first event – the dawn -- of the new, eschatological age of God's kingdom. God promised that his kingdom would come, and the resurrection is the first event of the fulfillment of that promise. That there is an outstanding future due

to the final fulfillment of that promise is common to each of our theologians. There is an event in the future that we wait upon – the coming of Christ – and it will be the completion of the process of redemption that was begun at the resurrection.

As a result of our analysis, we have seen that the eternal God's relationship to time is not that of negation or opposition. Rather, God's eternity is the ground of time, and God includes time within his eternity. God's eternity incorporates time in order to give time its dynamic nature as creation relates to its creator. God is personal, and God is personally involved in creating and sustaining all reality. There is a teleological goal for all reality. While Mackintosh and Brunner grant a more positive interpretation to history as it moves toward its goal, Moltmann maintains that history's goal is completely outside of time and is incapable of being produced by it. For Moltmann, the coming of God is what will transform all that is historical in what shall be eternal.

The result of this redefinition of time has allowed us to alter our doctrine of God from that of classical theology. In the traditional approach, God's eternity was synonymous with immutability and impassability, and this approach is discounted by our three theologians. They maintain that the God revealed in Jesus Christ is not only capable of change, but that he is also passionately and intimately involved in the lives of his people and with all creation. God, therefore, because he is personal, incorporates change and time within his eternal being.

The concepts of time and eternity that we have been examining are ultimately related to the prospect of hope that Christians have for the eschatological future. By asking so many questions about time's relationship to eternity, Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann establish themselves as theologians of hope. They have hope for the future of humanity and all creation on account of God and not because humanity will

save itself through an evolutionary process leading to perfection. Hope comes from the eternal God who has intervened in time in a most powerful way: by making himself subject to time and its finitude. In this way, time has been redefined in Reformed eschatology through the hope-filled eschatologies of Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann.

To conclude my analysis of time and eternity, I would like to propose one line of exploration that I believe has great potential for adding to our understanding of the time-eternity relationship. This line is important because it speaks to many of the issues and doctrines that I have been examining in this dissertation. I believe also that it provides a way of continuing the hopefulness espoused by Mackintosh, Brunner, and Moltmann in their respective presentations of eschatology, time, and eternity.

Every era possesses its *Zeitgeist* which threatens to undermine faith and hope in God's future. Challenges to Christian eschatological hope emerge on an academic level from all quarters of the human sciences and philosophy. In dangerous ways, nihilistic, selfish, and exploitative approaches to life challenge eschatological hope in our increasingly global economy and society. Theology must deliberately demonstrate how Christian hope offers an alternative to all pessimistic approaches toward the future of humanity and all creation. As the "century of eschatology" has given way to a new century, what can we anticipate as strong challenges to Christian hope, and in what ways may we maintain hope as the time-eternity relationship is pushed into new frontiers of thought and inquiry?

All three of our representative theologians believe that Christian hope is the only answer to the vexing problems of their respective generations, and they are each well-versed in the challenges to hope in their contemporary generations. Mackintosh wrote in an era when faith in human spiritual, intellectual, and technological progress

was mowed down by machine guns in battle. Challenges to God's omnipotence and eschatological purposes manifested themselves in doubts about God's ability to influence history toward God's kingdom. The *Zeitgeist* of Brunner's day was the rise of totalitarianism and oppression that swept across the political landscape in which he lived, and further doubts were cast upon God's loving intent for creation and humanity. Moltmann's generation inherited from Brunner's a world of potential nuclear catastrophe and a world where there is an alarming concentration of wealth in the northern hemisphere as opposed to the poverty of the southern. Our three theologians proved successful in rising to the need of speaking theologically about hope for the future of the world when there are great causes for despair in the present.

What remains to be seen is the legacy of these three theologians as their shared eschatological emphases, as well as their disagreements, lead us as we take account of the spirit of the new century. What is the spirit of the age of the current generation, and how should contemporary eschatological doctrine resonate, critique, and challenge it in a faithful way? First of all, some things have not changed from the last century to this one, and the work of our three representative theologians is just as important in this day as in theirs. Their refusal to separate eschatology from ethics is just as important today as it has always been. There are still raging political and economic injustices that each so carefully addresses, and genuine eschatological hope should never shun the harsh realities of this life in favor of a better life in the future. We have seen in all three theologians an emphasis on ethics that will not allow eschatology to focus on "other-worldly" matters while ignoring the plight of those people who suffer in this world. The need for Christian hope to deal squarely with human sin will never change, and likewise Christian hope is truly eschatological when

it displays a faithful trust in Christ's final redemption of creation, especially for those who are the victims of history.

There is, however, another spirit of our age in this new millennium that holds great potential and danger for Christian interpretations of time and eternity. It is a prevailing attitude that is actually centuries old, yet it has reached an unprecedented magnitude in recent years. I am speaking of the belief that the world, human beings, and all reality can be explained and should be understood only from the observations of the empirical sciences. For hundreds of years there has been a perceptible breach between the cosmic world-view of faith and that of science, a break which is traceable to Enlightenment-era thinking in the seventeenth century. The ensuing scientific revolution initiated by them caused the gap to grow between the scientific and religious views of reality.¹ The divergent views of nature, human origins, life, and cosmology have continued from the seventeenth century until now, and the prevailing sense in our day and age is that science has won.²

By saying that science has "won," what I mean is that in our modern world people believe that the pre-modern view of reality contained the Bible is no longer acceptable. A modern picture of reality is too "advanced" to believe that scripture contains anything more than mythology and moral lessons. An allegedly scientific view of reality cannot trust biblical history as the locus of revelation of the living God and God's purposes for creation. People now turn to scientific explanations of reality rather than theological ones, and people are more eager than ever to believe in the

¹ Ian G. Barbour traces the development of this split in *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues* (London: SCM Press, 1998), 4-72.

² This opinion is based not only on the claims of those who are hostile to religion but also on the admission of theologians themselves. See Barbour, *Religion and Science*, xiii; Peacocke, *Theology for a Scientific Age: Being and Becoming -- Natural, Divine, and Human* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 1-23.

progress of technology to offer salvation as opposed to the message of the Christian Gospel. Barbour states the case that

since the Enlightenment, the Christian story has had a diminishing effectiveness for many people, partly because it has seemed inconsistent with the understanding of the world of modern science...Much of humanity has turned to science-based technology as a source of fulfillment and hope. Technology has offered power, control, and the prospect of overcoming our helplessness and dependency.³

The credibility of religious beliefs has been called into question as more and more scientific discoveries offer explanations for phenomena once thought to be mysterious or miraculous. The positive benefits accrued by scientific and technological advances are coupled with a view that science provides final explanations of reality over against the explanations of pre-modern cosmologies.

The popular perception is that science has discredited religion and has replaced faith and theology as the means through which people make sense of their lives and all reality. While this process of science's perceived triumph over theology has been taking place and increasing for many years, it reached a peak in the latter years of the twentieth century to the point where it is the dominant world-view today.⁴ Faith in God has given way to faith in science to explain life's mysteries, and trust in God's providence has been replaced by a trust in technology's ability to solve humanity's problems. No one should lament technological advances that promote health and make life better, and positive scientific advances as such should not be disparaged. Yet the Truth of faith has been lost with our modern world's sacrifice of

³ Barbour, *Religion and Science*, xiv.

⁴ Russell Stannard says: "It is commonly held that religion is something you grow out of; that when it comes to the big questions of life -- those to do with meaning and purpose, and where we humans fit into the overall picture -- we should be looking not to religion, as was done in the past, but to science. Though people still retain a sense of awe and wonder when confronted by the mysteries of the universe, the sense of worship to which this sometimes leads has been displaced from God to science." Russell Stannard, *Science and Wonders: Conversations about Science and Belief* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), xiii-xiv.

theology on the altar of science. This is the *Zeitgeist* of our modern world in which Christians now live and which theology must address.

Is there a way for eschatology to state its case for trust and faith in God's eternal kingdom, while being fully cognizant at the same time of the dominating position of science in the contemporary world? How should Christian doctrine build upon the gains of the century of eschatology and proclaim the hope of Christianity in a way that does not compromise the essentials of eschatology and appears plausible to the contemporary scientific world-view? I believe there is a way for eschatology to proceed, and this way grows out of the fruitful dialogue that has occurred between science and theology in the last two decades.⁵ This dialogue has been especially productive in closing the perceived gap between theology and science, showing that the two fields are not as disparate as popular opinion would suggest.

While a scientific world-view may dominate, there is too much interplay between Christian doctrine and scientific principles to say that one automatically excludes the other. In fact, the opposite is true, as these recent conversations between the two fields have proven. Science and theology can be integrated in such a way that demonstrates that the fields are not mutually exclusive but complementary. And, more important and relevant for this particular project, there is a way that eschatology and science can be integrated in regard to the topics of time and eternity. These may be addressed in such a way as to make genuine Christian hope available to those who wrongly perceive that science has made hope in God's kingdom either unconvincing or impossible. The way in which eschatological hope speaks to the spirit of our

⁵ The last two decades have seen a flurry of activity in the area of dialogue between science and theology. In addition to the ones previously mentioned, other texts include: Nancey Murphy, *Anglo-American Postmodernity: Philosophical Perspectives on Science, Religion, and Ethics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997).; Philip Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).; John Polkinghorne, *Science and Christian Belief: Theological Reflections of a Bottom-Up Thinker*, The Gifford Lectures 1993-1994 (London: SPCK Press, 1994).

scientific age is through the category of *supervenience*. God's eternal kingdom is supervenient to all dynamic reality, and through this relationship we may describe how God offers hope for modern men and women.

Supervenience is a concept that has come to the fore in both philosophy and science in the last decade.⁶ Adapted from the field of philosophy of the mind, supervenience has proven to be an immensely helpful category in the theology-science dialogue because it provides a conceptual model to explain God's means of interaction with the world. Supervenience, when applied to the human person and the mind, expresses the principle of how non-physical, mental events and the physical brain function in tandem. Mental events are caused by the brain's functioning, yet mental events cannot be reduced strictly to phenomena of the brain: a mental event is larger than the physical phenomena which constitute it. There is a hierarchy of complex systems within the human person because the physical functions contribute to mental events, yet the mind is more than the mere functioning of the brain. Ellis and Murphy explain that

a mental event is supervenient on a state of the brain....To ascribe mental properties to an individual is to describe, at a higher level of complexity, properties that could also be *partially* described (in theory, at least, if not in practice) at the level of neurophysiology. Second, however, the mental properties cannot be simply identical with the brain states. The mental property's greater complexity consists in its relation to environmental variables that cannot themselves be reduced to brain events.⁷

Living beings are, therefore, hierarchical systems in which more complex phenomena supervene on lower, subvenient causes. This concept of supervenience has been

⁶ See especially Jaegwon Kim, *Supervenience and Mind: Selected Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); E. Savellos and Ü. Yalcin, eds., *Supervenience: New Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Dennis Beilfeldt, "Supervenience as a Strategy of Relating Physical and Theological Properties," in *Studies in Science and Theology* 5 (1999): 163-176.; Beilfeldt, "The Peril and Promise of Supervenience," in *The Human Person in Science and Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000), 117-152.

⁷ Ellis and Murphy, *On the Moral Nature of the Universe*, 32-33.

expanded from the philosophy of the mind to demonstrate how different properties within a physical system act upon each other. Higher level entities act upon subvenient, lower level properties because they are constituted by them but may not be reduced solely to them alone.

Supervenience thus gives rise to the principle of "top-down" causation, which explains how more complex entities in a hierarchical system act upon the less complex events which constitute them. The actions of lower level properties cannot be predicted by looking at them alone. One must observe their place within the larger system, and the whole system partially determines how the lower level entities will act.⁸ Based on this understanding of increasingly complex levels which interact in a hierarchical system, theologians see a model of how God interacts with creation. In a holistic way, God acts in a "top-down" manner toward the creation God has made. Mackintosh states this principle theologically when he states that Christians trust that the "meshwork of cosmic energies is the instrument of a loving Will not confined by their limits or exhausted by their efforts, but capable of using them for sovereign and gracious ends."⁹ Reality, as Mackintosh sees it, is this complex "meshwork" at the disposal of God, which today's scientific theology describes through supervenience.

Brunner and Moltmann propose a kenotic concept regarding creation in which God willingly limits himself in order to make creation possible. As Moltmann suggests, God, in the primordial moment, restricted his omnipresence in order to grant space to creation. Without some form of self-limitation on God's part, creation could not exist. Therefore, all reality exists in the space that God has allowed that is different from God's own being. This kenoticism is what inspires scientifically-minded theologians like Arthur Peacocke to propose that creation exists in the space

⁸ Ellis and Murphy, *On the Moral Nature of the Universe*, 24.

⁹ Mackintosh, *Person of Jesus Christ*, 435.

that God has created for its independent existence. Therefore all reality, including its temporality, is composed of complex hierarchical systems that God supervenes upon with top-down causality.

Yet we must remember here a point that is crucial to all three theologians: the distinction between the Creator and creation. Mackintosh very deliberately contradicts the Hegelian idea that creation and God are basically synonymous, and he sees a terrible philosophical mistake in his day that confuses creation with God in a pantheistic manner. A supervenient view of God and creation does not assert that creation comprises God, although creation is dependent upon God and God determines creation.¹⁰ Therefore the world should not be understood as God's body, as has been suggested by some.¹¹ Supervenience allows for distinction and difference, even if one level in a system is dependent upon a higher level for its direction.¹²

Following Moltmann's lead we see that creation exists *panentheistically* within in the space God allows for creation's existence.¹³ Everything exists in the separate space God allows for creation, but God is not pantheistically within all created matter. Current theological cosmology proposes that God interacts with creation in a top-down manner that does not compromise the integrity of nature's operating laws observed by science. Yet God supervenes on reality to bring about goals and results that are consonant with the divine will. Peacocke describes supervenience and God's top-down causation in the following manner:

¹⁰ Thomas Torrance speaks of this in a way with his idea of the "contingent order" of creation that exists in dependence upon God. See his work *Divine and Contingent Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

¹¹ This suggestion has been made by ecofeminist theology, especially in the work of Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 69-87.

¹² Bielfeldt, "The Promise and Peril of Supervenience," 131.

¹³ Peacocke, *Theology for a Scientific Age*, 158-161; See also Polkinghorne for a brief critique, *Science and Christian Belief* (London: SPCK Press, 1994), 64-66.

A combination of the notion of top-down causation from the integrated, unitive mind/brain state to human bodily action with the recognition of the unity of the human mind/brain/body event *together* provide a fruitful clue or model for illuminating how we might think of God's interaction with the world. According to this suggestion the in-principle cognizable aspects of the state of the world as a whole (all-that-is) would be known only to God and would be the field of exercise of God's influence at God's own level of comprehension. Just as our human personal subjectivity (the sense of being an "I") is a unitive, unifying, centered influence on the conscious, willed activity of our bodies, and this is what characterizes personal agency, so God is here conceived as a unifying, unitive source and centered influence on the world's activity. We are exploring here the notion that the succession of the states of the system of the world-as-a-whole is also a succession in the thought of God, who is present to it all; and that this is a model for, as analogous to, the way, it has to be presumed, a succession of brain states constitutes the succession of our thoughts. In this model, God would be regarded as exerting continuously top-down causative influences on the world-as-a-whole in a way analogous to that whereby we in our thinking can exert effects on our bodies in a "top-down" manner.¹⁴

Through this concept of supervenience, the eternal God who is above, outside, and around time allows creation to operate in a freedom that is apart from God, yet God communicates his intentions within the complex levels of creation's operating systems.

The turn toward eschatology and supervenience may be made keeping in mind the work of our three theologians, who each affirm that God is acting upon the world to bring about its fulfillment in his kingdom. I propose that supervenience provides the method of understanding how God acts upon the world to fulfill his promises without violating the laws of creation that the modern preference for science deems coherent and inviolable. Supervenience may be applied to address the primary area of eschatology that we have examined in this thesis: time and eternity. I am not proposing another attempt at scientific eschatology -- the way in which the world will

¹⁴ Peacocke, *Theology for a Scientific Age*, 161.

end.¹⁵ I agree with Brunner in his assertion that the physical processes by which the world may end, for example in a "big crunch," do not, ultimately, negate the establishing of God's new creation. Rather, I am attempting to show that the concept of supervenience is a helpful model to demonstrate how we may view the relation of God's eternity to time in such a way as to maintain the hopeful belief that creation has an eschatological origin and goal in the glory of God.

Eternity Supervenes on Time

We have seen that twentieth century eschatology reshaped the understanding of time and eternity in that eternity is now understood to be a description of God's being which incorporates time. Eternity is descriptive of the quality of God's life rather than God's timelessness. For human beings, temporal life is marked by transience, change, and death, while eternal life characterizes living in the fullness of God's presence. As a result of faith, eternal life has begun now for human beings in a provisional way. We have also seen how the resurrection of Jesus was an eschatological event that ushered in the new eschatological eon for creation. The process of creation's transition from temporality to eternity began at the resurrection and will be completed at the consummation.

For this reason, I believe that a better description for creation's existence in the present is Moltmann's term "*the interlacing of the times*" rather than "between the times." "Between the times" captures the notion that the world still exists dynamically after one event and before another, i.e. after the resurrection and before the consummation. This is where Moltmann stands with his view of the future of

¹⁵ There have been numerous attempts to describe the end of the world scientifically. For example, Paul Davies, *The Last Three Minutes* (London: Phoenix, 1994).

Christ's advent, hence his future-oriented eschatology. In a sense Moltmann is right: history and humanity still await their ultimate redemption in Christ's final revelation of God's kingdom. Yet what this view lacks is a proper emphasis on the way in which God's eternal kingdom exists now in relation to creation. I propose that time and eternity interlace in a way that supervenience can best describe.

As a result of Christ's resurrection and the new, eschatological age ushered in by it, we may say that the eternity of God supervenes on temporal reality. We have seen how important the human experience of time is to our theologian's understanding of the relation between time and eternity. On the one hand, human beings experience time in the linear, unidirectional movement captured by the tenses of past, present, and future. Peacocke comes to the same conclusion from a scientific point-of-view by stating that the "thermodynamic arrow of time" is necessary in the processes of life and that "the direction of time in which our lives move, from birth to death, is the same on the cosmic scale as that in which physical and biological forms develop."¹⁶ In the creation of time, God instituted this single direction of the flow of time. Yet we have also seen that human beings experience time in a way that suspends this flow by allowing access to the past and future in the present. Natural processes are irreversible, but psychological processes allow for a transcendent simultaneity within human experience. This simultaneity is reflective of God's own experience of eternity, in which the Christian is invited to participate through faith.

Brunner's accent on *durée réelle* and Moltmann's eschatological moments of aeonic time express this concept of a person's participation in God's eternal simultaneity. All human experiences of eternity are relative to God's, however, and thus we see how eternity supervenes on time. The "time" of a person's life is actually

¹⁶ Peacocke, *Theology for a Scientific Age*, 32.

that person's whole history of being -- all the individual moments that make up the totality of a person's life. Yet this totality of moments is a unified whole in one's eternal life given by God. All the moments of my life will in eternity be a simultaneous moment without the distinctions of past and future. Further, the eschatological moments of eternity in this life, as described especially by Moltmann, are actually the supervenience of God's eternity on my subvenient temporality.

The interlacing of time and eternity comes to the foreground here when one considers both the one-dimensional and simultaneous experiences of time. The resurrection is the event by which God has introduced simultaneity into the Christian experience of time. Christians live within creation's temporality and God's eternity, but God's eternity *takes precedence* over human temporality. God's eternity supervenes on a human's temporality to give it structure, to provide it direction, and to bring it to a hopeful conclusion.

A supervenient approach to history is possible considering the affirmations that all three theologians give to the necessity of historical events for the redemption of humanity. As we have observed, our theologians stress both the immanence of God within history as well as God's transcendence over history. Supervenience relies on a carefully crafted argument to express how God may work within creation without violating its natural laws. In the terminology of scientific theology, God acts on both micro-levels in sustaining creation and macro-levels in redeeming it.¹⁷ In this way, we meet our theologians' insistence that humanity must be redeemed from within history by the specific, immanent acts of God.

¹⁷ Murphy, "Divine Action in the Natural Order: Buridian's Ass and Schrödinger's Cat," in *Chaos and Complexity: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, ed. Nancey Murphy, Robert J. Russell, and Arthur Peacocke (The Vatican: The Vatican Observatory Foundation, 1997).

With supervenience in mind, we may say that God acts upon creation from in a “top-down” manner through the incarnation, and God acts from within creation through the life of the incarnated Son. The incarnation, life, and death of Jesus are the primary means by which God redeems humanity from sin and creation from evil. Moltmann stresses the ongoing history of Jesus as the means of human salvation and hope, and in this way the eschatological history of Jesus is therefore supervenient to the earthly history of Jesus. Jesus' ministry is yet to be completed because creation still waits for his final manifestation in glory. The Son's eschatological history cannot be reduced to his earthly ministry, yet it is the earthly ministry that constitutes his eschatological history without being limited to it.

One of the fundamental aspects of supervenience regarding the humanity is that it negates the idea of body/soul dualism regarding the anthropological make-up of a personality. Scientifically-minded theologians draw upon supervenience to assert that mental processes are dependent upon physical stimuli and chemical reactions, yet mental states cannot be reduced to their physical causation. Using this supervenient approach we may speak of the resurrection of the body in such a way as to state how the resurrected body supervenes on the earthly body. In the interlacing of eternity and temporality, I am joined to Christ's resurrected body through faith and the Spirit, and the power of his resurrection is alive in my mortal body. In this way my personality, body and soul together, shares in Christ's resurrection, and resurrection life is present in me. My resurrected body supervenes on my mortal body in such a way that I can experience resurrected life here and now. All three of our theologians express the view that the resurrection of the dead signifies the transformation of the human person from one bodily existence to another. My mortal body constitutes my resurrected

body, yet my resurrected body exists on a plane higher than the physical body and cannot be reduced to it.

Since a supervenient analysis of any system assumes that lower level systems are constituents of higher level entities, and these higher level entities act upon the lower to influence them in a certain direction, we may take this idea a step further to say that God supervenes on creation in order to move it providentially toward its consummation in the kingdom of God.¹⁸ Faith in a teleologically-guided creation is found, to one degree or another, all three theologians' views on the eschatological goal of creation. The kingdom of God is the highest order toward which God is moving creation. To say that the kingdom of God supervenes on creation is to affirm that the kingdom is comprised of the current creation -- its life and relationships. This harmonizes with Moltmann's views on the relation between the current creation and the new eschatological creation that God is bringing about.

The new creation was begun by the resurrection of Jesus, and his resurrection life signals what life will be like in the kingdom of God. The new creation is supervenient to the old creation through resurrection because, as Moltmann and Brunner affirm, the new creation will emerge out of the old. In God's kingdom creation will not be destroyed but will be transformed. Thus, the old creation is a lower-level system that both constitutes and is acted upon from without by the new creation, a higher level entity of God's causation. The new creation cannot be reduced to the old creation, yet the new creation is dependent upon the old creation for its content and relationships.

This preliminary excursion into the concept of supervenience is meant to provide one possible direction for the future of eschatological dialogue. Describing

¹⁸ Moltmann offers a brief "experiment," as he calls it, in this direction in "Reflections on Chaos and God's Interaction with the World From a Trinitarian Perspective," in *Chaos and Complexity*, 208-210.

the relationship of God's kingdom, and all it entails, to the present creation requires various methods, such as that of the supervenient/subvenient relationship. There is more work to be done in this area to ascertain the benefits of interpreting concepts like time and eternity through the models brought over from contemporary science.

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